



# Downtown Boise Design Goals and Objectives

This document is an abbreviated collection of design goals and objectives taken from the master plans adopted by the CCDC Board of Commissioners and the Boise City Council for the Central, River Myrtle-Old Boise, and Westside urban renewal districts. CCDC has identified these goals and objectives as having high priority in CCDC's review of downtown development projects. They are grouped by the following topics:

- Site Layout and Design
- Building Design
- Building Design Principles for Specific Uses

Under each design goal there are a series of statements or questions that highlight characteristics that CCDC examines to assess if the goal is being achieved. These statements and questions suggest objectives that would lead to meeting the goal

## A. Site Design & Layout

1. Site design *minimizes the impact of on-site parking and delivery zones* on the urban fabric.
  - a. **Method of providing for parking and deliveries**
    - Is parking being provided in either an underground or above-ground parking structure rather than in surface parking lots?
    - If a parking structure is physically or financially difficult, has the developer considered obtaining approval from the city for use of parking in an existing parking structure rather than providing surface parking on-site?
    - If surface parking appears to be the only option, is the developer proposing the minimum number of spaces required by Boise City to keep surface parking areas at a minimum?
    - Has an off-street loading and unloading area been provided?
  - b. **Placement and design**

**For parking structures:**

    - If an above-ground parking structure is proposed, has it been designed to include pedestrian-oriented uses on the first floor if the parking structure abuts a street frontage?
    - Has the parking structure been designed so that the upper floors facing streets are attractive and interesting rather than utilitarian?
    - Has the developer adequately explored configurations for the parking structure that would screen it from the street?

**For surface parking:**

- Has the developer adequately explored using structured parking or off-site parking to avoid an on-site, surface-parking solution?
- If surface parking is proposed, has it been placed so buildings screen it from street view? Has every effort been made to locate surface parking away from street frontages?
- If surface parking is proposed on a street frontage, is it located on a secondary street rather than prime pedestrian-oriented street?
- For surface parking on street frontages, has the building line along the sidewalk been echoed by installing a fence or wall along the edge of the parking area? Has landscaping been provided to beautify the view of the parking area for passersby?
- Has the surface parking area been configured so it would be easy to redevelop as a building site in the future?

**For delivery zones:**

- Are areas for loading and unloading placed so access is from an alley rather than a street?
- Are they screened from view of the street?
- Does the placement of the delivery zone avoid removal of or damage to street trees?

2. Site improvements are *appropriate for an urban setting*.

- What type of treatment is proposed for site areas not being used for either building or parking?
- Does the treatment utilize a mixture of hardscape and softscape that is typical of urban areas? Does it avoid extensive lawn areas and shrub beds that are more typical of suburban areas?

3. Public improvements *set a standard of quality and are consistent with the design standards* in the urban renewal district master plans.

**a. Streetscaping**

- Are the improvements proposed to surrounding sidewalks consistent with the streetscaping standards for the district where the project is located? (See Appendix 4 for more information.)

4. Project design *makes connections to existing public spaces*.

- If the building is located in close proximity to public space such a park, plaza, pedestrian promenade or bike path, has the building been designed to take advantage of this asset?
- Have connections been made between the building and the public space?
- Have doors been oriented so they encourage people activity in the public space? Are windows oriented so there are “eyes on the park” to make the public space safer?

## **B. Building Design**

1. Building design *responds to the context* surrounding the site.

**a. Size, scale and orientation**

- Do the size, scale and orientation of the building relate well to neighboring properties?

- If it is noticeably larger or smaller in scale, has an effort been made to create a transition?
  - Does it make a positive contribution to the overall fabric of the area in which it is located?
- b. Climate**
- Do the building design and orientation consider climatic factors?
  - Does the building include operable windows, natural ventilation and daylighting?
  - Has weather protection been provided along sidewalks bordering the building?
  - If outdoor space is being proposed, has it been placed to create a positive microclimate for people using it?
2. Building design *addresses the street and creates a pedestrian-oriented environment* for passersby.
- a. Orienting buildings to street**
- Have buildings been placed up to the sidewalk line rather than pulled back?
  - Are building entrances oriented to street frontages surrounding the building rather than to parking areas?
  - Are building entrances placed on the streets that have been designated as prime pedestrian-oriented streets in the plan?
  - Have building entrances and connections from entrances to sidewalks surrounding the building been emphasized?
- b. Creating human scale and activity at the street**
- Does the building design differentiate the first floor from upper floors so it creates a human scale at the street?
  - Are the uses proposed for the first floor ones that will create visible activity to passersby? Are these 9-5 weekday-type uses or will the activity extend to evenings and weekends?
  - Does the first floor have frequent, storefront-style windows to allow passersby to see the activity occurring inside the building?
  - Where restaurant uses are a reasonable possibility, has the location of the building relative to the sidewalk allowed for outdoor dining space?
  - Is the building interesting and inviting at the street level?
- c. Providing weather protection**
- Does the building design include canopies, awnings or other features that provide weather protection over the sidewalk? At building entrances?
4. Building design *uses a coherent style of architecture that addresses all sides of the building and gives it a distinctive, well-designed appearance.*
- Does the building design use an architectural style that is consistent on the different facades of the building and in how the building is detailed?
  - Does the building have distinctive features or elements?
  - Does the building harmonize or contrast with surrounding architectural styles?
  - Will the building make a lasting contribution to the architectural heritage of downtown Boise? To the range of architectural styles and experiences?
5. Building materials used *convey a sense of quality and permanence.*

- Has the developer used materials such as natural stone, brick, decorative precast concrete or refined exterior metal panels?
  - Is there a consistent quality of materials used on all sides of the building and from the ground floor to the roofline?
  - At a minimum, are quality materials used on all visible sides of the building and at the street level?
  - Do the building materials convey a sense of enduring quality?
6. Project *incorporates sustainable development practices and uses green building techniques.*
- a. **LEED™ certification**
    - Will the project qualify for LEED™ certification?
  - b. **Land use mix and transportation**
    - Does the project include a mix of uses that make it possible for people to meet some or all of their daily needs by walking, bicycling or using transit rather than an automobile for transportation?
    - Has the developer included bicycle lockers and showers to encourage walking and bicycling?
    - If the project is located near existing transit facilities, is it at an appropriate density to take advantage of this proximity to transit? Does the project design incorporate transit stops?
  - c. **Energy efficiency considerations**
    - Will the project use renewable energy sources?
    - Will the project reduce energy consumption and costs, and increase livability by taking advantage of natural ventilation, heating and cooling, and daylight?
    - Will the project connect to the City's geothermal system for heating?
  - c. **Water Efficiency**
    - Does the project use "green" roofs for storm water detention and dampening temperature swings.
    - Does the project include a system for water recapture and reuse? Is this water used for irrigating landscaping and streetscaping?
7. If the project involves renovating or reusing a historic building or constructing a new building in a historic district, the building design *demonstrates respect toward historic resources.*
- **New construction in historic districts**
    - If the building is located in a historic district, is its size and scale sensitive to the historic character of the area?
    - If the building will be built new, is its design enough of a departure that it complements rather than imitates a historic style? Does it avoid being a faux historic building?
  - b. **Renovating, reusing or adding to historic buildings**
    - If the building is classified as a landmark or contributing building by Boise City, are proposed additions or alterations in keeping with the building's historic character?

- Have previous additions or alterations that were substantially out-of-character with the building's historic design been reduced or eliminated?
- If the project will result in new construction in a historic district, is the new building appropriate in size, scale and design to the district?

## **C. Building Design Principles for Specific Uses**

This section describes design principles as they relate to the following uses:

- Office
- Retail
- Hotels
- Housing

### **1. Office**

- Design the first floor of the building along street frontages for more street-oriented uses such as retail, restaurants or service businesses where sufficient market exists to fill these spaces.
- If market support for street-oriented uses is weak, design the interior layout of the first floor so common areas associated with the business are visible through the windows. Examples include lobbies, waiting areas, conference rooms or cafeterias.
- Use storefront-style windows on the first floor.
- Incorporate artwork or display windows on the first floor.

### **2. Retail**

- Locate retail uses in clusters by placing them in retail districts or along retail streets identified in the appropriate urban renewal district master plan.
- Avoid placing retail space in projects where it is likely to remain empty due to location, isolation or lack of market support. Empty storefronts tend to sap vitality more than omitting retail space.
- If a project has potential for retail uses in the future, but insufficient market support is available today, consider designing the first floor so it can be converted to retail space at a later date.
- Use a high percentage of glazing on building facades where retail will be located; storefront-style windows are strongly encouraged.

### **3. Hotels**

- Locate hotels in close proximity to uses that will gain support from hotel guests, visitors and employees.
- Cluster hotels near convention and entertainment uses and near shopping and dining districts.
- Locate hotel entrances so they create pedestrian travel patterns that help enliven adjacent blocks.
- If retail and restaurant uses are located within a hotel, place them along street frontages and include street entrances to these businesses.
- Use a high percentage of glazing on building facades where hotels are located; storefront-style windows are strongly encouraged.
- Place public spaces inside the hotel along street frontages so they are visible to passersby.
- Give attention to the need for and location of drop-offs.

#### 4. Housing

Because building a larger volume and broader spectrum of housing in downtown Boise is a pioneering effort, CCDC is taking particular care in its review of housing proposals. Below is a list of design principles that CCDC feels are very important in creating successful housing projects.

- Does the exterior design of the building communicate that it is a residential building? Will potential residents see the building as signifying “home”?
- If housing is in a mixed-use building, is the residential portion served by its own entrance? Are the other uses compatible?
- If housing goes to the street level, and there are entrances from units on the first floor direct to the sidewalk, has a semiprivate zone between the building and the sidewalk been created for the first floor units?
- What has been done to eliminate noise and smoke transmission between units?
- Has secured storage space been provided?
- Do units have washer and dryer hookups?
- Do they have operable windows? Will the way the windows open add visual interest to the building? Will the window system convey that this is a residential building?
- Has outdoor space been provided for each unit through patios, balconies or decks?
- Has common open space been provided?
- Does the project have dedicated parking? How many spaces are being provided per unit?
- Have bicycle and motorcycle parking been provided?
- Will pets be allowed?