

Downtown Design Standards

City of Big Lake, Minnesota

- ***Land Use Elements***
- ***Architectural Elements***
- ***Streetscape/Site Planning Elements***



October 2005
Revised June 2008
Revised March 2019

Downtown Design Standards *City of Big Lake, Minnesota*

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Downtown Design Standards City of Big Lake

Introduction

In November of 2004, the City of Big Lake adopted a plan and set of design guidelines for its downtown area entitled the “Big Lake Downtown Framework Plan and Design Guidelines.” The document establishes a vision and specific guidelines related to future development in the City’s Central Business District (land concentrated around the Highway 25, County Road 5, and Highway 10 intersections). The guidelines provide a definition of desired design principles in the area related to site planning, building placement, architecture, lighting, signage, materials as well as design of public spaces.

To fully implement the previously established “guidelines”, the City now wishes to integrate the guidelines via the creation of an overlay zoning district, property within which will be subject to certain design standards. Basically, the intent is to transform the “guidelines” into “standards” or more absolute requirements.

Each of the first four sections of the Standards is presented in a three column format. The first column identifies the element or issue being addressed.

For each issue or component, the second column provides one or more guideline which describes the present goals of the City relating to that issue. Column three lists regulations which are intended to be adopted as a part of the City Code. These regulations are specific requirements of every project. The decision to establish regulations for the named elements reflects the City’s belief that certain minimum standards are

applicable to all projects in order to carry out the purposes stated in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and previously adopted Design Guidelines.

Consistency with Other Plans and Codes

In some cases, the guidelines and regulations in these Downtown Design Standards may differ from other plans, codes and ordinances of the City. In such cases, the following procedure is to be followed when confronting a conflict in regulation:

1. The Big Lake Comprehensive Plan is the underlying basis for land use regulation in the City. All of the regulations and requirements of the Standards should be interpreted in the context established by the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The base zoning district defines the allowable land uses on any parcel. The regulations found in the City’s Zoning Ordinance, as well as any other ordinances, still apply.
3. The Downtown Design Standards comprise a specific implementation tool of the Comprehensive Plan. Where the Standards differ from other City ordinances, it is the City’s intent that the Standards will control. Due to the greater detail, the requirements and recommendations of the Downtown Design Standards are defined as being “more restrictive” for purposes of applying multiple regulations.

Downtown Design Standards City of Big Lake

4. The Downtown Design Standards shall not supersede any building, fire, or disability code that has been adopted to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.

General Objectives of the Downtown Design Standards

The Downtown Design Standards are established with the objective of encouraging high standards of building and site design in Big Lake's Central Business District, consistent with the previously adopted Design Guidelines.

Developers of property in the Central Business District should be prepared to demonstrate adherence to these Standards as a part of the City's project review process as described in the following paragraphs. Toward this end, the City encourages the use of qualified architects and landscape architects in project design.

Scope and Application

The policies and regulations in the Downtown Design Standards apply to all projects in the Design Overlay District of the City exempting existing single family residential uses. For convenience, a map depicting the boundaries of the Design Overlay District is provided on page iv.

Depending on the scope of the project, one of two different review processes will apply. These are as follows:

1. Administrative Review Many projects will require administrative review only. These include projects which involve minor exterior alterations to existing buildings, but which do not require separate zoning permits. Maintenance of existing buildings requiring a building permit and replacement of materials consistent with the Downtown Design Standards will require only administrative review.
2. Planning Commission and City Council Review. Projects of greater scope, or those which already require more extensive City zoning review, will need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and then approved by the City Council. Such projects include:
 - a. Those buildings that are completely new.
 - b. Those which alter the building design or materials more than 50% of any single exterior building wall or roof surface.
 - c. Those which require variances, subdivision approval, conditional use permits, other zoning permit or amendment.
 - d. Those which alter the height of an existing building by more than two feet up or down.
 - e. Those which alter the lot coverage of an existing building by more than 10% up or down.

- f. Those accessory buildings within areas subject to the Standards.

Existing single family structures within the Design Overlay District are exempt from the Design Standards provisions. Conversion of a single family structure to a conforming business-related use shall, however, require Downtown Design Standards review, as provided for in Section 2, above.

A project which complies with a guideline statement will likely be viewed more favorably than one which does not. However, adherence to the overall character is the bottom line. Projects which achieve the character objectives may be able to overcome modifications to individual “guideline” statements.

Any project subject to these Standards will be required to conform to the Standards only to the extent that the project involves design features addressed by the Standards. As an example, a building project which consists of replacing windows will be required to meet the Standards with respect to the windows, but will not be required to also change its non-conforming roof style to comply with the Standards. Building additions that increase the total enclosed volume of the structure will require the entire building to be brought into Standards conformance.

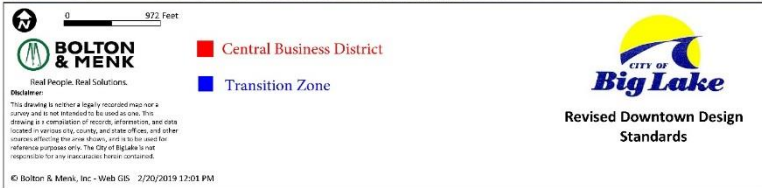
A glossary of terms applicable to these Downtown Design Standards is found starting on page 25.

June 2008 Revision

In order to maintain the overall intent of the Downtown Design Standards of creating a downtown area with high quality development and yet be flexible enough to enforce these standards beyond the true Central Business District (CBD) area, the City Council revised the District Map and created a “transition zone”. On the Zoning Map and District Map, there is identified a Core CBD and a Transitional CBD. All standards herein shall be strictly enforced in the Core CBD as stated above. In the Transitional CBD, these standards are intended as general guidelines to be followed and the General Building Regulations on Section 1040 of the Zoning Ordinance shall apply. The City of Big Lake encourages general elements from the guidelines to be incorporated in building design in the Transitional CBD in order to meet the intent of a transition from the General Commercial zone to the Central Business District.

March 2019 Revision

The City Council revised the boundaries of the “Core CBD” and “Transitional CBD” in accordance with the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan steers the area near the intersection of US Highway 10 and State Highway 25 towards being the “Town Center.” It states that the Town Center area should be considered the Core CBD and remain in that part of the overlay while the rest of the existing Downtown Design Standards area should be moved to the Transitional CBD.



Downtown Design Standards City of Big Lake

Process for Filing and Review

Procedure

1. Applicants requesting Downtown Design Standards review are required to contact the City Planner in order to set up a pre-application meeting to discuss the project in question. A meeting with City staff is required to discuss the application process, Downtown Design Standards policies and regulations, review conceptual plans, provide advice and to avoid any unnecessary plan modifications or design related conflicts.
2. Requests for Downtown Design Standards review by the Planning Commission and City Council shall be filed with the City on an official application form at least 45 days in advance of the meeting at which it will first be considered. Said application shall be accompanied by a fee as provided for by the official City Fee Schedule. Such application shall be accompanied by plan copies as specified in the City's development application. The City may waive or alter any of the submittal requirements specified herein if not applicable to a project. The request shall be considered officially submitted and the application approval timeline commences only when all the information requirements of this section are complied with and the required fees are paid.
3. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.99, an application for a project shall be approved or denied by the City Council within 60 days from the date of its official and complete submission, unless notice of extension is provided by the City or a time waiver is granted by the applicant. The City may extend the review and decision-making period an additional 60 days to the extent allowed by State law.
4. Upon receipt of the completed application, the City shall schedule review of the request at the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting.
5. The City may request additional information from the applicant to clarify the application and intent of the project.
6. The Planning Commission shall make its report to the City Council after conducting the initial review.
7. Upon receipt of the reports and recommendation of the Planning Commission, the City Council shall have the option to set and hold a public hearing on the request. The City Council may also refer the matter back to the Planning Commission for further consideration.
8. Approval of the application by the City Council shall require passage by a majority vote of the entire City Council. The City Council may impose such conditions and restrictions as it deems appropriate or require such revisions or modifications it deems necessary to protect and enhance the general architectural and site character of the City's commercial areas consistent with the policies and regulations of the Downtown Design Standards.

Downtown Design Standards *City of Big Lake*

9. The City Council reserves the right to decline approval of a request if due regard is not shown for the policies and regulations of the Downtown Design Standards provided herein.

Submission and Presentation Requirements. In addition to any submittal requirements required by the City, applicants shall submit the following documents to portray their design proposals for either administrative or Planning Commission / City Council review. The City may waive any of the requirements specified below if not applicable to a project:

1. Colored illustration site plan.
2. Colored perspective sketch representing realistic proportions of the building and its immediate surroundings.
3. Colored building elevations (front, rear, and sides at ¼ inch scale minimum).
4. Partial or enlarged building elevation (1/2 inch scale minimum).
5. Enlarged sketch of site amenities.
6. Materials board with actual examples of all building materials.
7. Colored computer graphic simulation and/or an architectural model.

Note: Sketches and simulations shall depict landscaping at no more than five years' growth.

Note: Additional presentation items may be required based upon the size and complexity of the specific development proposal.

Downtown Design Standards City of Big Lake

Variances

1. Findings. The City Council may approve a variance from these Standards when, in its opinion, exceptional and undue hardship may result from strict compliance. In approving any variance, the City Council shall prescribe any conditions that it deems necessary to or desirable to the public interest. A variance shall only be approved when the City Council finds that each and every one of the following apply, unless one or more of the criteria are not applicable to the particular situation:
 - a. There are special circumstances or highly unique conditions affecting the property such that the strict application of the provisions of these Standards would deprive the applicant of a reasonable use of the land or buildings.
 - b. The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to other property in the area in which property is situated.
 - c. The variance is to correct inequities resulting from an extreme physical hardship such as topography or to prevent removal of significant or desirable vegetation.
 - d. Hardships relating to economic difficulties shall not be considered for the purpose of granting a variance.
 - e. The hardship is not a result of an action by the owner, application, or any agent.
 - f. The variance will not in any manner vary the process of the Downtown Design Standards or the area subject to Standards review.
2. Procedures.
 - a. Requests for variance shall be filed with the City on an official application form at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which it will be considered. Said application shall be accompanied by a fee as provided for by City Council resolution. The request shall be considered officially submitted and the application approval timelines commences only when all the information requirements of this section are complied with and the required fees are paid.
 - b. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.99, as may be amended, an application for a variance shall be approved or denied by the City Council within 60 days from the date of its official and complete submission unless notice of extension is provided by the City or a time waiver is granted by the applicant. The City may extend the review and decision-making period an additional 60 days to the extent allowed by State law.

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- c. The procedures for Planning Commission review and City Council consideration, as found in the Process for Filing and Review section of the Standards, shall be used for processing variances.
- d. Approval of a variance request by the City Council shall be by 4/5 vote of the full City Council.
- e. Whenever a variance has been considered and denied by the City Council, a similar application and proposal for the variance affecting the same property shall not be considered again by the Planning Commission or City Council for at least six months from the date of its denial, except as follows:
 - 1) If the applicant or property owner can clearly demonstrate that the circumstances surrounding the previous variance application have changed significantly.
 - 2) The City Council may reconsider such matter by a majority vote of the entire City Council.

Appeals

- 1. Board Designation. The City Council shall serve as the Board of Adjustments and Appeals.
- 2. Applicability. An appeal shall only be applicable to an administrative order, requirement or interpretation of intent of provisions of these Standards. Opinions and

evaluations as they pertain to the impact or result of a request are not subject to the appeal procedure.

- 3. Filing. An appeal from the action of an administrative officer of the City shall be filed by an officer, department, board or commission of the City or a property owner or their agent with the City within 10 business days after the making of the order, requirement, or interpretation being appealed.
- 4. Stay of Proceedings. An appeal stays all proceedings and the furtherance of the action being appealed unless it is certified to the Board of Adjustments and Appeals, after the notice of appeal is filed, that by reason of facts stated in the certificate a stay would cause imminent peril to life and property.
- 5. Procedure. The procedure for making an appeal shall be as follows:
 - a. An appeal shall be filed by an officer, department, board, or commission of the City or a property owner or their agent with the City stating the specific grounds upon which the appeal is made. Said application shall be accompanied by a fee as established by City Council resolution. In cases where the application is judged to be incomplete, the City shall notify the applicant, in writing, within ten business days of the date of submission.

- b. The City shall instruct the appropriate staff persons to prepare technical reports when appropriate and shall provide general assistance in preparing a recommendation on the action to the Board of Adjustment and Appeals.
- c. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.99, the Board of Adjustment and Appeals shall make its decision by resolution within 60 days from the date on which a completed application is filed.
- d. The City shall serve a copy of the final order of the Board upon the applicant by mail.

LAND USE ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
Mixed Uses	Downtown development should be appropriate for a traditional downtown area, with mixed use buildings combining retail, commercial, and residential uses; two and three story buildings are encouraged.	Uses permitted within the Design Overlay District shall be in accordance with the applicable underlying zoning district as indicated on the official zoning map of the City.
Destination Uses	Destination retail, restaurant and entertainment uses, particularly mixed with compatible, complementary, or other synergistic uses, are encouraged.	
Auto-Oriented Uses	New auto-dominated commercial development such as fast food, gas, or similar drive-through facilities should be discouraged, and commercial “big box” or larger retail-only or other single use commercial developments should be highly discouraged in the downtown district.	

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
General Design Principles	Historic structures should be preserved and maintained whenever possible as important contributors to Big Lake's character. All new development shall be designed to value, respect and preserve identified natural features and resources. Buildings should be designed to relate well to the existing environment, both natural and man-made, and consider context in massing, materials, style and color; design of the landscape and hardscape should be coordinated and harmonious with the building design and materials. All new development should be sensitive to existing residences in the design and location of new uses and buildings with respect to shading, views, light or noise pollution; where necessary appropriate screening or buffering shall be provided.	
Unifying Design Concept	Architecture of new buildings should be respectful of the existing historical structures which enhance the character of Big Lake. Design which reflects the elements of vernacular "Main Street" or "Prairie Style" architecture is encouraged.	All new buildings in the Design Overlay District shall be of a "Main Street" or "Prairie Style" architecture, as defined in the Downtown Design Standards glossary .

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

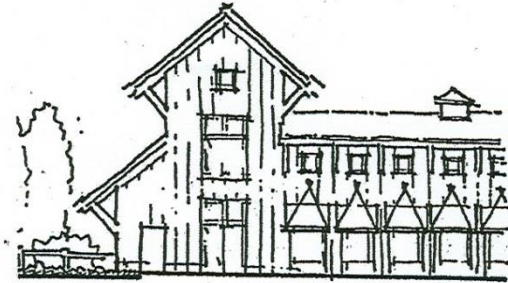
Issue

Guideline

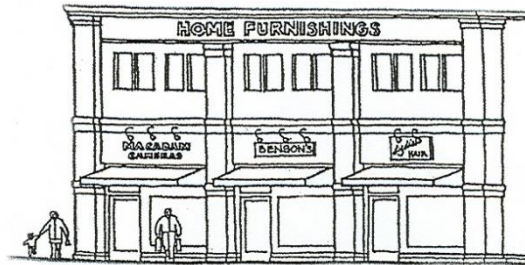
Regulation

Unifying Design Concept
(continued)

All downtown buildings should be designed with a traditional “Main Street” character and quality.



Prairie Style: roofs are hipped, low and spreading with deep overhangs and eaves.



Traditional Main Street style building: flat roofs, often an extended or false parapet on “front” side.

The harmonious composition of similar or complementary forms is encouraged, both within a single building and within a block of buildings.

Except where the “Main Street” or “Prairie Style” character otherwise directs, new buildings, remodelings, and additions shall relate to the character of the original building on the site or to traditional buildings around them, when these are present. This can be achieved by maintaining similar setbacks, modest building scale and height, cornice lines, horizontal lines of windows and openings, architectural styles and details, building materials, and colors.

Building additions shall reflect the design of the existing building where the existing building is in compliance with the Downtown Design Standards.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
Building Placement	Zero lot line buildings are allowed and highly encouraged on all streets within the downtown district; awnings, overhangs and arcades are encouraged where pedestrians are expected to walk and shop. Buildings should be oriented to the street with traditional storefronts along the sidewalk. Taller buildings should be encouraged where views may be concentrated, such as terminal views. Only small areas of open space should be included at the street, primarily for pedestrian access and for outdoor seating areas and cafes.	Zero lot line setbacks shall be allowed when determined to be consistent with architectural context of the area.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Composition and Detailing

Variations in façade depth should be encouraged.

No building design shall be approved which includes less than 40%, nor more than 75%, window and door area at the base of the façade for buildings. The minimum/maximum window and door area shall apply to all facades directly adjacent to a public street.

Building design should avoid large areas of blank wall space toward the streetfront façade.



The building base should be specifically expressed (i.e., via the use of masonry).

All buildings shall have an identifiable ground level base element.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Composition and Detailing
(continued)

Continuous stretches of single façade designs are discouraged to avoid monotony.



The use of architectural features and detailing to enhance building surfaces should be encouraged. Such features may include setback of upper floors or roof line, strong building corner features, entrance detailing and emphasis, canopies, projected or recessed windows, etc.

Well proportioned building features and detailing should be utilized to achieve a human scale.

Corners, cornices, windows, and doorways shall include additional architectural detailing beyond the basic building wall materials or pattern of traditional style buildings.



ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
Building Height	Base of façade height should reflect the predominant base level height of neighboring buildings in the downtown area.	Building heights shall be in accordance with the requirements of the underlying zoning district.
Street Front Entry / Doorway	Building entries should be visible from the street, well lit, covered or protected from weather, and include significant glazing and glass doors where the public will be entering buildings. Principal entryways for each building should comprise a major architectural feature of the base level. Single doorways with other architectural features are the preferred design. The use of canopies and awnings are encouraged for all entryways, or for a greater width of the building as appropriate. Buildings with canopies extending for a greater width should include additional architectural detail in the entryway design.	No entry shall project into the public right-of-way. Double door entryways shall be no more than seven feet in width.  Canopies, awnings, and other similar architectural features shall project no more than three feet into public right-of-way. No building shall use permanent, retractable, or roll-down security doors or bars which are visible to the public from the street or sidewalk.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Street Front Entry /
Doorway
(continued)

Canopies and awnings should not cover or obscure architectural building details.



Except where specifically allowed by the City of Big Lake, canopies shall be constructed of cloth, glass, or metal materials. Canopy design shall include appropriate detailing reflecting the architectural style of the building. Backlit awnings which are transparent shall not be permitted.

A minimum of seven feet of vertical clear space shall be maintained between the lowest point of the canopy and/or its structural elements, and the ground elevation.

Street Front Windows

The use of shutters should be considered only where the architectural design of the building dictates. Shutters should be discouraged at the base level.

Window openings may be modulated to a scale and proportion complementary to the architectural style. To the extent possible, the historic window dimensions should be adhered to. The use of significant glass area shall be encouraged for retail store display.

Single window panes shall not exceed four feet in width.

No more than 50% of upper building levels shall be comprised of glass.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Street Front Windows
(continued)

Individual window panes should be vertically proportioned.



Window sill height on the base level shall be no less than 12 inches nor more than 32 inches above interior finished floor elevation.

Window placements (fenestration) may include either recessed or projected window locations, including bay or bow windows.

Where window projections are used, no projection may extend to within ten feet of the curb line of the street, nor more than two feet from the front line of the building.

Decorative lintels, transoms, and arched window heads are encouraged.

Window bay widths shall range from a minimum of 12 feet to a maximum of 20 feet.



ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Bay Width

Bay widths should reflect the available lot width, and should be divided so as to provide regular patterns of bays of equal widths, or a wider central bay with narrower flanking bays.



Upper floors shall be designed to clearly reflect the division of bays at the base level.

The pattern of bays in a building should be reflected in all floors through the use of appropriate architectural features such as pilasters or other detail.



ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Roofs

Projects should be encouraged to provide a varying roofline along the block.

Cornice treatments should be prominent and of complementary, but contrasting, colors and materials compared to the principal building.



Roof style in the downtown area should be predominantly flat, with parapets and/or cornices. Sloped, as opposed to flat, roofs should be utilized only in transitional areas from commercial to residential land uses, or where traditional architecture of the original building supports sloped roof design.

Roof top elements shall be constructed of brick or other material to be approved by the City which is complementary to the building materials which comprise the bulk of the building.

Architectural elements such as cornices, decorative chimneys, and strong corner elements shall be used to enhance the roof line of traditional style buildings.



Mansard roofs or mansard-style canopies shall not be permitted. Flat, gabled, shed, hip, pitched, round or arched roof designs, depending on the neighborhood context, shall be required for new construction or qualifying redevelopment projects. Definitions of roof styles are found in the Glossary of this report.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
Roofs (continued)	Rooftop equipment should be screened from the line of site of pedestrians and integrated into the design and massing of the roof form.	Roof or wall mounted mechanical equipment shall not be visible from adjacent public areas. Equipment shall be placed in a location on the roof which eliminates visibility or parapets shall be constructed which fully screen the equipment. Said parapets shall be coordinated with building architecture and materials, and may not consist of fencing or fencing materials.
	Roof lines and cornice details shall be completed in a three dimensional manner so that the back of roof features or similar unfinished areas are not visible.	Gutters or other storm water controls shall be constructed of weather-durable materials. Plastic shall not be considered an acceptable material.
Building Materials	Buildings should be designed with quality materials on all sides. All facades shall be articulated with a variety of materials, glazing or other details to add visual interest, although the front façade may have a unique design or more significant glazing.	Brick and glass shall be the dominant exterior building materials used for facades adjacent to a public street. Brick shall be maintained in its natural color and shall not be painted. Upon approval of the City, materials other than brick, including manufactured stone, may be utilized as the primary material upon a demonstration that the architectural appearance will complement the building materials of surrounding structures in the neighborhood. A specific architectural style or historic development, as determined by the City, would constitute one possible basis for such demonstration.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
Building Materials (continued)	Buildings should be constructed and maintained for permanence and longevity therefore durable, maintainable materials should be used.	Concrete masonry units (CMUs) shall be allowed only on a case-by-case basis where appropriate to the design, architecture, and neighborhood context of a building.
	Where building materials are different from level to level, color, texture and form should be integrated between levels where possible.	Complementary building materials may be used as detail, including metal, stucco, Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EFIS), stone, precast architectural concrete, but shall not exceed 30 percent of the total area of facades adjacent to public rights-of-way. When glass is the predominant building material, brick shall be the dominant complementary material.
	Buildings should be finished in acceptable tones and colors that complement neighboring buildings.	
Rear Façade Entry / Doorways	Prominent rear building entryways should be provided where the potential exists for rear access to parking.	Building design and site layout shall emphasize attractive and safe rear building entryways from parking areas or trails. Character and design of the rear façade shall be consistent with the front and sides of the building.
	Door widths may be varied in rear areas to accommodate service needs.	

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Franchise Design

Corporate architecture is not desirable in the downtown district. Corporate chains should work to customize their architecture to express their design “brand” within a design, context, and material appropriate to the character of downtown Big Lake.

Franchise design shall be allowed only to the extent that the materials, colors, and scale are designed to meet these Standards and the project is integrated into the architectural context created by surrounding buildings.



STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Parking

Off-street parking should not be located between a building and the street or main road it faces. Distribute parking around the building, especially to the side and back of buildings. Shared parking should be encouraged to take advantage of varying parking demands between mixed uses.

Where a parking lot is located along a street, it should be well landscaped and screened with a combination of fencing or wall plantings along the street edge. Larger parking areas should be planned with internal landscaping and divided into smaller areas where possible.

Opportunities for several, smaller parking areas should be sought. Quantity should be balanced with aesthetics to avoid views of vast parking lots.

On-street parking is encouraged on downtown streets. Streets should be designed with the parking zone designated either by curbing or with a change in paving materials. Where possible, shared access and parking should be encouraged.

All off-street parking areas shall be screened in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Big Lake Zoning Ordinance.



Where a parking lot is located along a street, it shall be well landscaped and screened with a combination of fencing or wall plantings along the street edge.

Parking areas of more than 30 spaces shall include planting islands equivalent to 15% of the total area. No parking area planting island shall have any dimension (length or width) of less than ten feet.

Existing parking areas not in conformance with this regulation shall be brought into compliance with the screening requirements in conjunction with any permit or other activity which is subject to these Standards.

STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Access and Communication

Public and private information to vehicular and pedestrian traffic should be clear and identifiable, using a common theme.

Private site development should utilize the community theme in providing information to both pedestrians and vehicles. Private development and redevelopment projects should be designed to emphasize and facilitate convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation and access.

Private property owners will be encouraged to make public pedestrian access available through their properties throughout the community's regular business hours, including entertainment businesses.

All projects shall be required to demonstrate convenient connections to the adjoining pedestrian and bicycle circulation system, whether private or public.

Commercial developments shall incorporate bicycle parking spaces, whenever appropriate, in a convenient, visible, and preferably sheltered location.



STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Open Space

Open space is an important asset in the commercial districts, encouraging visitors to spend more time in the community. Private property owners should be encouraged to design small gathering and resting places into their development or redevelopment projects.

Both private and useable public open space should be provided. Such open space should be connected to existing or proposed trails and sidewalk networks.

Small parks are encouraged at the Highway 25 and Highway 10 intersection to form a Town Square, a community focal point and gathering space for downtown visitors.

Materials should be encouraged which architecturally and aesthetically tie private and public open spaces to the buildings.

Public sidewalks should be utilized for public or privately provided seating, trash receptacles, and other street furniture when adequate space remains for public use, including circulation and visibility.



STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Open Space (continued)



Private resting and gathering open spaces should use materials which are coordinated with both the building to which they relate, and to the public pedestrian system.

Walkway and Driving
Surface Construction

New downtown development should provide for pedestrian as well as vehicle circulation, and should create linkages to existing and proposed sidewalks and trails.

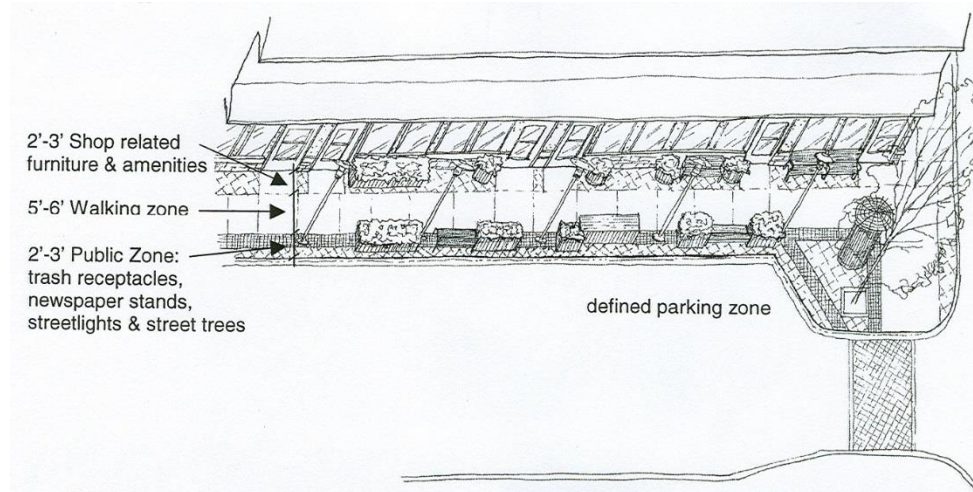
Downtown district sidewalks shall be not less than ten feet in width and be “zoned” to provide for landscaping and street trees, street and sidewalk lighting, areas for seating, a pedestrian walking path and an area designated for other street furniture and commercial opportunities, including newspaper boxes, trash receptacles. Where narrower sidewalks exist, zone closest to shops may be eliminated.

STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation



No private or public furniture or other obstructions shall restrict the width of public sidewalks to less than a six foot wide walkway. Such furniture shall not be closer than five feet to any other public furniture, nor shall such obstructions extend to within two feet of the face of the curb.

Walkway and Driving Surface Construction (continued)

Private walkways, including sidewalks, should be constructed of materials which provide a contrast with driving surfaces.

Asphalt shall not be permitted as a material for paving of private sidewalks or other pedestrian ways. Brick, textured and colored concrete, and natural stone shall be permitted. Other materials may be permitted by the City.

Pedestrian ways other than sidewalks adjacent to public streets shall be developed to a minimum walking zone width of five feet. Sidewalks adjacent to public streets shall encompass the full width of the area between the curb and the front property line, with the exception of public planting and street furniture areas which meet the setback distances described above.

STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Lighting

Natural and/or site lighting should be provided for the illumination of private open spaces to maximize safety and security.



A lighting plan which reflects the pedestrian scale of the City and provides full lighting of private property shall be prepared as a part of any development or redevelopment plan subject to these Standards. All lighting shall conform to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and include full cut-off fixtures to reduce unnecessary glare.

Street lights on the public right-of-way and site lighting shall be replaced at the time of redevelopment so as to match or complement fixtures in conformance with City standards.

Furniture and Planters

Lake Street should be restored to be closer to its original, traditional downtown “Main Street” form, lined with street trees and planters, pedestrian street lights, and street furniture including benches and trash receptacles. The fixtures that are selected for Lake Street should be required on all streets within the downtown district and highly encouraged throughout the Central Business District for visual continuity.

STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Furniture and Planters
(continued)

The use of private seating areas and planters is encouraged, particularly to assist in the emphasis of rear entrances to commercial buildings.



Furniture elements should complement the building to which they are related, as well as the public improvements adjacent to the site in question.

Site furnishings should consider other structural elements in their location and materials, including awnings and canopies.

STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Site Plantings

Existing plantings and trees should be preserved to the extent possible in all new development/redevelopment. Plant materials should be used which demonstrate adaptability to urban conditions, including salt spray, stormwater runoff, and reflected pavement glare and heat.

Planting areas should be located and designed to avoid visual interference with public signage and private commercial communication.

The use of tree grates and tree guards is encouraged in both public and private planting areas. Materials should be used which are complementary to other street and site furnishings, and should be consistent throughout the downtown area.

The use of planters, hanging baskets and other decorative features on the sidewalk, buildings, or light posts is encouraged throughout the downtown.

All trees that are removed in the public right-of-way as a result of development or redevelopment shall be replaced according to City standards with appropriate use of tree guards and grates.

All tree and plant species shall be indigenous to the appropriate hardiness zone and physical characteristics of the site. Suitable tree and plant species shall be consistent with those identified as acceptable within the Zoning Ordinance.



STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue	Guideline	Regulation
Other Site Improvements	Buildings should be oriented to minimize views of service areas and loading docks from the street. If these areas are visible, they should be buffered with a combination of landscaping and screening. Mechanical equipment and trash areas should be fully enclosed and integrated into the architecture and materials of the building.	All exterior trash storage areas shall be fully screened with materials compatible to those used in the principal building(s), in accordance with Zoning Ordinance and as approved by the City of Big Lake.
	Equipment, mechanical systems, transformers, etc. should be screened from view in a way that is integral to the architecture of the building with similar materials. Metal fencing or mechanical vent screens alone is not sufficient.	Where a site includes mechanical equipment on the ground, such equipment should be screened from view with materials compatible to those used in the principal building(s), in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance as approved by the City of Big Lake.
	All site fencing should be constructed of materials which are consistent with the principal structures and site furnishings.	Utility lines shall be placed underground by the developer wherever feasible with any new development or redevelopment.
	Dominant materials should be brick and wrought iron (or a compatible substitute).	

STREETSCAPE / SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS

Issue

Guideline

Regulation

Other Site Improvements
(continued)

Trash storage areas should be integrated into the structure wherever possible. Where such receptacles must be located outdoors, full screening of the area should be applied using materials and design which are consistent with the principal building.

Efforts to share exterior trash storage areas are strongly encouraged.



Service entrances, stairways, porches, decks, and railings should be designed to provide adequate access and security, but with materials and aesthetics which are consistent with other exterior areas of the site and building.

Public art is encouraged. Such art should be determined by the City to be compatible with the desired character of the downtown.

Exterior stairways, porches, decks, and railings shall be designed and constructed of materials appropriate to the architecture of the building.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

The following terms are descriptive only and are set out for the convenience of the user. This glossary is not intended to replace the meaning given to the same terms in other City ordinances.

Access: A way or means of approach to provide physical entrance to a property.

Aesthetic: The perception of artistic elements, or elements in the natural or man-made environment which are pleasing to the eye.

Aisle: The traveled way by which cars enter and depart parking spaces.

Architectural Control: Public regulation of the design of private buildings to develop, preserve or enhance the attractiveness or character of a particular area or individual buildings.

Asymmetric Balance: A dissimilar yet harmonious composition of numerous similar or complementary forms. The composition shall reflect the local context, site conditions or building function.

Awning: A roof-like cover that is temporary in nature and that projects from the wall of a building for the purpose of shielding a doorway or window from the elements.

Axial Symmetry: A formal organization which balances equal elements and features around a vertical plane common in classified revival and colonial style buildings.

Base of Facade: The most public part of the building, featuring a larger glass area and often emphasizing its horizontal dimension.

Bay: The modular width of an architectural unit.

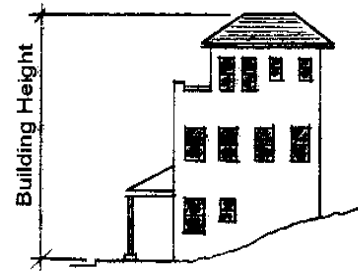
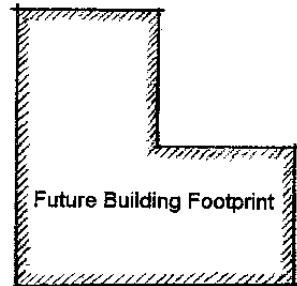
Berm: A landscaped mound of earth used to separate incompatible uses, screen off-site views of developments, mitigate noise impacts, and create aesthetic interest.

Buildable Area: The portion of a lot remaining after required yards have been provided.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

Building Facade: The portion of any exterior elevation of a building extending from grade to the top of the parapet wall or eaves and the entire width of the building elevation.

Building Height: The vertical distance to be measured from the mean ground level of the building footprint area before construction, to the cornice of a flat roof, to the deck line of a mansard roof, to a point on the roof directly above the highest wall of a shed roof, to the uppermost point on a round or other arch type roof, to the highest gable on a pitched or hip roof.



Building Line: A line parallel to a lot line, street right-of-way, street easement, or ordinary high water level at the required setback beyond which any story level of a building may not extend.

Bus Shelter: A small, roofed structure having from one to three walls, located near a street, and designed primarily for the protection and convenience of bus passengers.

Concrete Masonry Unit (CMU): A masonry unit made of Portland Cement, water, and mineral aggregates, formed into a rectangular prism. Such units are offered in various face designs including, but not limited to, split or rock face block, split scored, fluted, ribbed, and ground face. CMUs are manufactured under controlled conditions and are typically available in a variety of colors.

Courtyard Organization: Grouping of buildings to help define usable outdoor space.

Cut-Off Type Luminaire: A luminaire with elements such as shields, reflectors, or refractor panels which direct and cut-off the light at a cut-off angle less than 90 degrees.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

Downtown: The area of Big Lake included in the Downtown Design Overlay District.

Easement, Drainage: A grant by a property owner for the use of a strip of land and for the purpose of constructing and maintaining streets, trails, sidewalks, drives, and/or utilities, including, but not limited to, wetlands, ponding areas, sanitary sewers, water mains, electric lines, telephone lines, storm sewer or storm drainage ways, and gas lines.

Facade: The main exterior face of a building exposed to public view or that wall viewed by persons not within the building.

Fenestration: The design and placement of windows in a building.

Footcandle: A unit of illumination produced on a surface, all points of which are one (1) foot from a uniform point source of one (1) candle.

Frontage: That boundary of a lot which abuts an existing or dedicated public street, watercourse or similar barrier.

Glare: The effect produced by brightness sufficient to cause annoyance, discomfort, or loss in visual performance and visibility.

Green Area: Land shown on a development plan, master plan or official map for preservation, recreation, landscaping or park.

Human Scale: Human scale suggests designing with the pedestrian in mind rather than the automobile. Human scale is derived from a building=s architectural details and elements whose size people are familiar with.

Impervious Surface: An artificial or natural surface that is highly resistant to infiltration by water. It includes, but is not limited to, surfaces such as compacted sand, clay or gravel as well as most conventionally surfaced streets, roofs, swimming pools, sidewalks in excess of three (3) feet in width, parking lots, and other similar structures, but not including decks or platforms where one-quarter (1/4) inch gaps are provided between deck boards for water to drain.

Island: In parking lot design, built-up structures, usually curbed, placed at the end of parking rows as a guide to traffic and also used for landscaping, signing or lighting.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

Lot Coverage: The total allowable amount of lot area, expressed as a percentage, which may be covered by a principal use and its accessory structures but not including uncovered porches, decks, ground level landings, landscape structures or recreational facilities.

Main Street Style Architecture: An architectural style characterized by buildings with common features, including towers, turrets, castellations (a crenulated parapet style), large intended cornices, rows of arched windows. The Renaissance Period, Romanesque and Chicago School style also are related to the “main street” style.

Median Island: A barrier placed between lanes of traffic.

Modulation: Modulation is the relationship of bays and building widths to building height. A module.

Off-Street Parking Space: A temporary storage area for a motor vehicle that is directly accessible to an access aisle, and which is not located on a dedicated street right-of-way.

On-Street Parking Space: A temporary storage area for a motor vehicle which is located on a dedicated street right-of-way.

Opacity: Degree of obscuration of light.

Open Space, Common: Land within or related to a development, not individually owned or dedicated for public use, which is designed and intended for the common use or enjoyment of the residents of the development and may include such complementary structures and improvements as are necessary and appropriate.

Open Space, Green: An open space area not occupied by any structures or impervious surfaces.

Open Space, Public: Any open space publicly owned.

Open Space Ratio: Total area of open space divided by the total site area in which the open space is located.

Park: A tract of land, designated and used by the public for active and passive recreation.

Parking Access: The area of a parking lot that allows motor vehicles ingress and egress from the street.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

Parking Area: Any public or private land area designed and used for parking motor vehicles including parking lots, garages, private driveways and legally designated areas of public streets.

Parking Bay: The parking module consisting of one or two rows of parking spaces and the aisle from which motor vehicles enter and leave the spaces.

Pavement: (1) Brick, stone, concrete or asphalt placed on the surface of the land; (2) That part of a street having an improved surface.

Perimeter Landscaped Open Space: A landscaped area intended to enhance the appearance of parking lots and other outdoor auto related uses or to screen incompatible uses from each other along their boundaries.

Plaza: An open space which may be improved and landscaped; usually surrounded by streets and buildings.

Polygon: A closed plane figure with four or more sides.

Porch: A covered entrance to a building, usually with a separate roof.

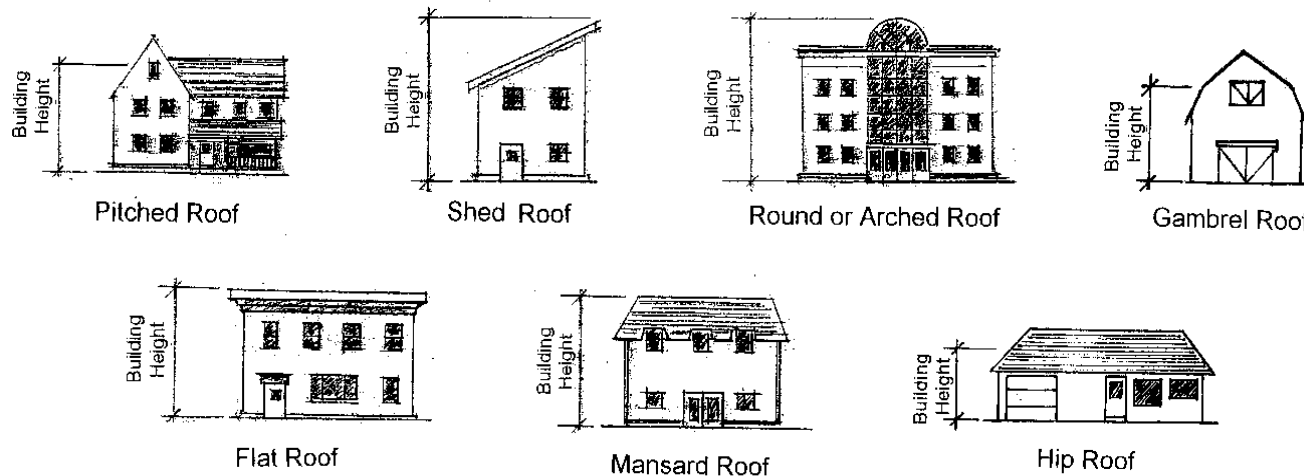
Prairie Style Architecture: An architectural style characterized by buildings with low pitched, usually hipped, roofs with widely overhanging eaves. They are generally open-planned, of two stories with single story wings, and/or porches. The ornamental detailing of eaves, cornices and facades are generally calculated to emphasize horizontality.

Public Areas: Public parks, playgrounds, trails, paths and other recreational areas and other public open spaces; scenic and historic sites; schools and other public buildings and structures.

Right-of-way: Land acquired by reservation or dedication intended for public use, and intended to be occupied or which is occupied by a street, trail, railroad, utility lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary sewer, storm sewer or other similar uses.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

Roofs:



Screening: A method of visually shielding or obscuring one abutting or nearby structure or use from another structure or use from another by fencing, walls, berms or densely planted vegetation.

Setback: The minimum horizontal distance between the foundation wall of a structure and the property line nearest thereto. Within shoreland districts, it shall also mean the minimum horizontal distance between a structure, sewage treatment system, or other facility and an ordinary high water level, sewage treatment system, top of a bluff, road, highway, property line, or other facility.

Shaft: One or more floors above the shop front, usually used for less public kinds of activities, featuring less window area than the ground floor and emphasizing its vertical dimension.

Sidewalk: A paved, surfaced or leveled area, paralleling and usually separated from the street, used as a pedestrian walkway.

Sight Triangle: A triangular shaped portion of land established at street intersections in which nothing is erected, placed, planted or allowed to grow in such a manner as to limit or obstruct the sight distance of motorists entering or leaving the intersection.

Downtown Design Standards - Glossary

Storefront Building: A commercial building located at the street line, with display windows and principal entry on the ground floor facing the sidewalk. Storefront buildings typically include traditional elements such as a sign band above the storefront, a transom, a recessed entry, and a kick plate as a base to the storefront.

Street Furniture: Man-made, above-ground items that are usually found in street rights-of-way, including benches, kiosks, plants, canopies, shelters and phone booths.

Traditional Building: Typically, a one or two story storefront building, as defined above. Other buildings may be considered traditional for the purpose of these guidelines based on their age, architectural character, or associations with persons or events important to the City's history.

Transparent-Opaque: Addresses how easy it is for pedestrian passersby to see the activity within a shop. Transparent shops serve better to attract people into the shop, while opaque storefront represent a break in the retail continuity.

Undulation: Variation in the height and/or roof lines of a series of adjacent buildings, as well as variation in the horizontal relationship of adjacent building facades.

Usable Open Space: A required ground area or terrace area on a lot which is graded, developed, landscaped and/or equipped, and intended and maintained for either active or passive recreation or both, available and accessible to and usable by all persons occupying a dwelling unit or rooming unit on the lot or a development project and their guests. Such areas shall be grassed and landscaped or covered only for a recreational purpose. Roofs (excluding roof gardens), driveways, and parking areas shall not constitute usable open space.

Window Head: The upper horizontal cross member or decorative element of a window frame. The heads of windows are formed in a variety of ways; some are semi-circle, arches or triangular shapes. Some have bold and rich decorative moldings.

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