

Section 8. **PUBLIC REALM DESIGN GUIDELINES**

• **District-wide Guidelines: Community Character**

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• **District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment**

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4. **Plant and Maintain Street Trees**
5. **Provide Ample Street Furniture**
6. **Include Pedestrian-Scaled Lights**
7. **Assist Visitor Orientation**

Adopted by the City Council
October 21, 2002

District-wide Guidelines: Community Character

Guideline CC 1 Promote Compact Development Patterns

Intent The commercial and social interaction required of a vital, energetic city core is facilitated by placing people in proximity to one another. This suggests a concentration of people, buildings, and activity. It follows that Downtown should be the most compact and densely developed area of the City. Compact development patterns contribute to a distinct urban image, define public space, support a diverse mixture of uses, and promote transit usage and pedestrian activity.



Downtown Precedent: strong building-street relationships distinguish the city core

Recommendations CC 1.1 Reinforce the spatial definition and social vitality of streets and important public space through compact development patterns.

CC 1.2 Provide sufficient building height and mass to spatially define public streets and civic spaces; establish a strong relationship between buildings and streets.

CC 1.3 Encourage infill development and the retention of buildings that define the street and contribute to an urban identity.



Downtown Precedent: building height and massing establish an urban identity

- Citywide Design Criteria**
- Community Identity: A community should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks.
 - Spatial Definition: A street should read as well-defined space.



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character

Guideline CC 2 Focus Activity on Public Places

Intent Public streets, plazas, parks and other important civic spaces support public life, and are a key component of successful urban places. These are not left-over spaces to be “dressed up,” but lively public places. Development should focus activity and attention upon and along these spaces. Because active public places tend to be defined spaces, buildings should contain and orient to these spaces.

Recommendations CC 2.1 Locate and mass buildings to consistently frame and define public space.

CC 2.2 Orient building entrances toward public space, and encourage adjacent ground floor uses that animate and enliven the space.

CC 2.3 Site service and parking facilities to face away from public spaces and activities.

CC 2.4 Use landscape to further define and contain public space; for instance, use street trees to delineate a public street.

CC 2.5 Create strong physical connections between public space and neighboring development.

Citywide Design Criteria

- Physical Connection: A community should connect through a network of public spaces and paths.
- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.



Downtown Precedent: buildings and uses support a high level of street activity



Downtown Precedent: defined urban spaces reinforce public life



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character

Guideline CC 3 Increase Physical Connectivity

Intent Downtown is generally amenable to walking, due in part to a fine-grained building and block pattern that offers the visual and physical connections advantageous to pedestrian movement. Plazas, courtyards, sidewalks, alley walkways, pedestrian paseos, and mid-block passages create a network of spaces that integrates the community, and an intricate network allows an interesting variety of alternative routes between places. Private and public sector investment should extend and enhance this network, providing safe and accessible paths throughout the area.



Downtown Precedent: outdoor paseos link sidewalks with on-site plazas and courtyards

Recommendations CC 3.1 Regard sidewalks and paths as unifying elements throughout Downtown; design and locate pathways and walks to promote physical continuity and connection.

CC 3.2 Promote new development that extends existing circulation patterns and connects important centers of activity.

CC 3.3 Extend the circulation pattern through publicly accessible walks, that are generally open to the sky; provide access to light and air.

CC 3.4 Provide ample width and design for universal access along pathways and walks.

CC 3.5 Incorporate human-scaled fixtures that emit a warm light along pedestrian sidewalks and paths to increase safety and comfort.

CC 3.6 Introduce shading elements and outdoor furniture such as benches to improve pedestrian access and comfort.



Downtown Precedent: alley walkways extend the pedestrian circulation system.

Citywide Design Criteria

- Physical Connections: A community should connect through a network of public spaces and paths.
- Visual Relationships: A community should take advantage of important views and vistas, and provide numerous opportunities for access to light and air.



Downtown Precedent: wide, continuous and protected sidewalks serve pedestrians



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character

Guideline CC 4 Protect View Corridors

Intent Downtown offers a number of high-quality views and vistas, in particular, prominent views of the San Gabriel Mountains and City Hall. These views distinguish Pasadena from other cities in the region, and orient residents and visitors alike to their location in the City. A strong Downtown identity depends upon the preservation and enhancement of these special views and view corridors.

Recommendations CC 4.1 *Frame important views of natural and man-made landmarks, and look for opportunities to open new views of landmark buildings and features.*

CC 4.2 *Discourage developments that obscure existing views along the public right-of-way.*

CC 4.3 *Prohibit buildings from locating over or across a public street, including buildings constructed as part of a bridge or overpass that crosses a public street.*

CC 4.4 *Restrict the construction of pedestrian bridges across north-south streets, and discourage their construction along all other streets in the Central District.*

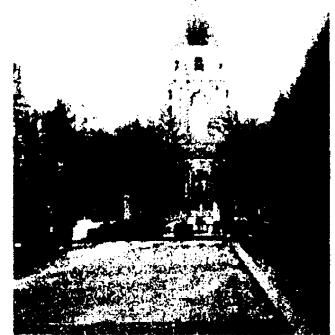
CC 4.5 *Limit pedestrian bridges to those that are least obtrusive; where provided, they should be of narrow width, open to the sky, and accessible to the public at all times.*

Citywide Design Criteria

- **Community Identity:** A community should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks.
- **Visual Relationships:** A community should take advantage of important views and vistas, and provide numerous opportunities for access to light and air.



Downtown Precedent: north-south streets offer scenic framed views of local mountains



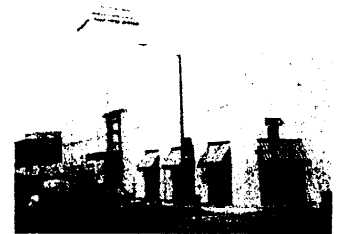
Downtown Precedent: prominent axial views focus attention on civic landmarks



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character

Guideline CC 5 Recycle Existing Buildings and Landscapes

Intent There is a wealth of value in Pasadena’s built resources that collectively make a positive contribution and add significant value to the Downtown community. Existing buildings and landscape elements provide a sense of historical and physical continuity, strengthen the urban fabric, and reinforce the unique qualities of the Central District.



Downtown Precedent: adaptive use ensures that the value of existing structures is not lost

Recommendations CC 5.1 Encourage the recycling of Downtown buildings and landscapes; in particular, retain historically and architecturally significant buildings through adaptive use.

CC 5.2 Maintain the distinguishing qualities and features of a historic or architecturally significant building, structure, or site.

CC 5.3 Repair and retain, rather than replace, original building materials, as far as feasible.

CC 5.4 Allow contemporary alterations and additions to historic or architecturally significant buildings, structures, and sites, provided they do not substantially alter or harm the distinguishing qualities and features, and are compatible in terms of scale and character.

CC 5.5 Support rehabilitation and restoration of historically significant buildings according to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards.

CC 5.6 Retain the following landscape elements unless removal or replacement supports long-term planning objectives: street trees; tree lawns; granite curbs; ornamental tree grates; historic street lights; and similar historic landscape elements.



Downtown Precedent: reuse of historic structures maintains a distinct urban character

Citywide Design Criteria

- **Community Identity:** A community should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks.
- **Cultural Expression:** A community should express local history and culture.



Downtown Precedent: historic streetscape elements add interest and identity



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character**Guideline CC 6 Promote Sensitive Infill Projects**

Intent New development should positively contribute to the public realm. Urban infill development offers an excellent opportunity to strengthen historic development patterns and restore the urban fabric. Vacant and underdeveloped lands interrupt the street wall and prevent suitable definition of the street, a condition commonly referred to as “missing teeth.” Infill projects can visually unify the street through the development of these properties. Nonetheless, sensitivity to the surrounding character and design context is crucial to their success.



Downtown Precedent: infill projects create a consistent street wall and unify the street

Recommendations CC 6.1 Emphasize infill development of vacant or underdeveloped land, especially projects that will promote a distinctive urban character.

CC 6.2 Support infill development that visually unifies the street; respect the street-oriented development patterns of existing buildings.

CC 6.3 Harmonize infill development with adjacent buildings through compatible scale, massing, rhythms (i.e., vertical and horizontal patterns expressed by architectural features such as cornice and belt lines, doors and windows), solid-to-void relationships, and/or materials.

CC 6.4 Avoid awkward and incompatible design solutions, and significant interruptions to the predominant scale of the street.



Downtown Precedent: infill developments reinforce the compact urban character

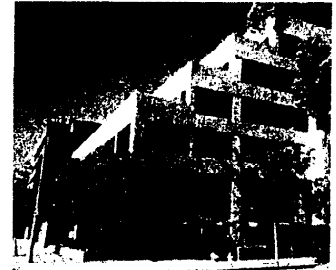
Citywide Design Criteria

- **Community Identity:** A community should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks.
- **Contextual Fit:** A building should fit with its surroundings.



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character**Guideline CC 7 Transition to Residential Neighborhoods**

Intent “In-town” and surrounding residential neighborhoods add immeasurably to the health and strength of the Central District. They are part of the essential mix that achieves full-time civic vitality, and as far as feasible, these areas should be protected from intrusive design and use. In particular, adjacent commercial development may compromise the character and livability of these neighborhoods through unresponsive scale and massing, and localized traffic and parking impacts. On the other hand, sensitive transitions will protect their intrinsic value.



Downtown Precedent: building height steps down toward residential neighborhood

Recommendations CC 7.1 *Protect in-town and surrounding residential neighborhoods from erosion of character; consider surrounding residential character in the planning and design of adjacent non-residential uses.*

CC 7.2 *Respond to adjacent residential uses with a sensitive transition in scale and massing; for instance, step-back building height and/or break up building mass.*

CC 7.3 *Design transitions between uses so as to maintain residential privacy, and site parking, service and storage facilities to minimize impacts on adjacent residences.*

CC 7.4 *Use available alleys for parking and service access to minimize traffic impacts on adjacent residential streets.*



Discouraged: incompatible transitions degrade residential properties

Citywide Design Criteria

- **Community Identity:** A community should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks.
- **Contextual Fit:** A building should fit with its surroundings.



District-wide Guidelines: Community Character

Guideline CC 8 Incorporate Civic Art

Intent Civic art provides multiple and layered expressions of local history and culture. It contributes to local identity and the unique qualities of place; it is a form of cultural enrichment. Civic art forms range from sculptural art pieces created for public plazas to artisan crafted architectural details. These forms might serve as a local landmark, delineate public space, or simply add richness to a building or landscape. Public spaces, private development projects, and infrastructure improvements are all encouraged to include a civic art component.

- Recommendations**
- CC 8.1 Use civic art to identify areas with a unique identity or celebrate the entrance to a public place; for example, mark gateways and other important public places and buildings with public art.
 - CC 8.2 Integrate works of public art into new development projects; encourage the participation of artists as a part of the design team from the project's inception.
 - CC 8.3 Incorporate civic art into public infrastructure projects.
 - CC 8.4 Make works of civic art accessible to the public; site civic art to draw people through public spaces, but do not impede pedestrian flows.
 - CC 8.5 Support the use of diverse media and art forms.
 - CC 8.6 Encourage works of civic art that celebrate local history and culture, and reflect the City's tradition of excellence and innovation in the arts and sciences.

- Citywide Design Criteria**
- Community Identity: A community should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks.
 - Cultural Expression: A community should express local history and culture.



Downtown Precedent: artisan crafted details enrich buildings and sites



Downtown Precedent: sculptural forms enliven plazas and engage the public



Downtown Precedent: public art celebrates local history



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 1 Make Streets Multi-Purpose

Intent Downtown streets should not be limited to the singular purpose of moving automotive traffic; these are highly public places where a diversity of people need to be accommodated. Vehicular traffic, public transit, pedestrians, and cyclists all need to be considered in the design of streets. Most importantly, streets must be amenable to walking, strolling, lingering, meeting, and conversing. Traffic flows should not inhibit the public life of the community.



Downtown Precedent: sidewalks accommodate the public in a variety of ways

Recommendations SE 1.1 Maintain a hierarchical distinction in the design of Downtown streets; nonetheless, all streets should accommodate a diversity of users, multiple purposes and modes of transportation.

SE 1.2 Design all Downtown streets for safe and comfortable movement on foot; incorporate a high level of streetscape amenity such as street trees, street furniture, and street lights.

SE 1.3 Use public landscape and streetscape improvements to communicate the public character and quality of Downtown's streets.

SE 1.4 Detail streets and streetscape amenities to high standards; show evidence of quality that is appealing to pedestrians.

SE 1.5 Treat transit stops as important public places; focus improvements on bus stops at or near important pedestrian crossings.

SE 1.6 Provide enhanced bus stops with seats and shelter to increase safety and comfort; consider additional amenities such as waste receptacles, water fountains, and directional maps.

SE 1.7 Provide adequate bicycle parking facilities along planned bicycle lanes and within major activity centers; encourage new developments to incorporate bicycle amenities.



Downtown Precedent: special paving at crosswalks helps pedestrians feel safe

Citywide Design Criteria

- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- Protected Sidewalks: A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians.



Discouraged: some streets communicate that they are only for automobiles



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 2 Minimize Pedestrian Conflicts

Intent Every time a car crosses a sidewalk there is potential danger and inconvenience to the pedestrian. Minimizing the number of curb-cuts along Downtown streets reduces potential conflicts in favor of the pedestrian. Utility equipment placed within the public right-of-way also creates impediments to persons on foot and especially those who are mobility impaired. Equipment placed on the sidewalk at or near the intersection is especially problematic, as this is a zone that needs to accommodate considerable pedestrian activity. Public utilities and streetscape amenities should be located to support safe, convenient and unimpeded pedestrian flows.



Downtown Precedent: wide sidewalks support streetscape amenities and a clear path

Recommendations SE 2.1 Minimize the number of drive approaches along a block to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles.

SE 2.2 Consolidate and place drive approaches near mid-block, when necessary; alley access should be provided for service and parking, if feasible.

SE 2.3 Public sidewalks should be of sufficient width to accommodate, street trees and street amenities, as well as a zone devoted to clear pedestrian passage.

SE 2.4 Maintain a minimum 5-foot clear pedestrian passage along public sidewalks (or as determined by the Director of Public Works & Transportation), without conflicts from utility equipment, street trees, street amenities, or other potential interferences.

SE 2.5 Design public sidewalks and connecting paths to meet at grade; sidewalks extending across private property should also continue at grade, where feasible.



Downtown Precedent: drive approaches are consolidated for continuous building frontages

Citywide Design Criteria

- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- Protected Sidewalks: A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians.



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 3 Protect and Shade Pedestrians

Intent The physical safety and comfort of pedestrians is critical to the success of Downtown. Pedestrians must feel that they are in a safe situation, and that they are a welcome presence in the community. Streetscape design and amenities should emphasize pedestrian safety and comfort. For instance, the proper placement of street furniture introduces distance and a perceived protection from vehicular traffic. On the other hand, the overhead cover provided by street trees offers shade and reasonable protection from the sun and rain.



Downtown Precedent: attractive street furniture separates pedestrians and autos

Recommendations SE 3.1 Locate street amenities in a zone along or near the curb as a barrier to automobile traffic; this is especially applicable to street lights, parking meters, street trees, trash receptacles, news racks, and heavy planters.

SE 3.2 Emphasize the planting of street trees to provide overhead cover; species choices should consider access to both shade and sun along sidewalks.

SE 3.3 Plant street trees in the zone adjacent to the curb that is also devoted to other streetscape amenities; exceptions may apply for unique conditions, such as a double row of trees.

SE 3.4 Encourage buildings adjacent the sidewalk to provide overhead cover in the form of canopies, awnings, and overhangs, especially where there is an insufficient or immature street tree canopy, or along a southern exposure.



Downtown Precedent: street trees and awnings provide protection from sun and rain

Citywide Design Criteria

- Spatial Definition: A street should read as a well defined space.
- Protected Sidewalks: A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians.



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 4 Plant and Maintain Street Trees

Intent Street trees provide numerous benefits and are an indispensable part of the Downtown environment. Most obviously, they enhance the visual quality of the area. Street trees also provide cooling effects and contribute to the spatial definition of the street to create a human-scaled space with a comfortable sense of enclosure. In general, street trees add a gracious quality to Downtown.

Recommendations SE 4.1 Plant street trees so as to define the street and sidewalk; emphasize the consistent use of tree species, size and spacing along a street to create a pleasant rhythm and reinforce the space of the street.

SE 4.2 Choose street trees that hold up to urban conditions and provide shady canopies at maturity; reference the City's Master Plan of Street Trees and applicable streetscape plans.

SE 4.3 Allow sufficient room for tree canopies to grow without conflict with other building elements, as far as this is feasible.

SE 4.4 Use tree grates in areas with considerable commercial and pedestrian activity; tree grates increase sidewalk width, reduce safety hazards, and prevent compaction of the root-ball.

SE 4.5 Maintain existing tree lawns, especially within the Civic Center and areas that are predominantly residential; new tree lawns are appropriate where residential use prevails.

SE 4.6 Utilize street trees to unify areas with a distinct identity; this is especially encouraged within the Old Pasadena, Civic Center, Pasadena Playhouse and Lake Avenue Sub-Districts.

SE 4.7 Reference the existing streetscape plans for the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, and Pasadena Playhouse Sub-Districts for detailed strategies in the treatment of street trees and other street amenities within those areas.

Citywide Design Criteria

- Spatial Definition: A street should read as a well defined space.
- Protected Sidewalks: A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians.



Downtown Precedent: consistent street tree plantings create a comfortable enclosure



Downtown Precedent: street trees shade the pedestrian and delineate the sidewalk



Downtown Precedent: trees lead a special identity to a street



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 5 Provide Ample Street Furniture

Intent Walking Downtown should be a pleasant and comfortable experience. Long walks without places to pause and rest may become daunting for some pedestrians. Street furniture, when combined with street trees and proper lighting, humanize and communicate the true public nature of Downtown streets. Most importantly, furnishings should include benches and trash receptacles.



Downtown Precedent: benches and decorative planters invite the public

Recommendations SE 5.1 Place street furniture, especially benches and trash receptacles at frequent intervals along sidewalks for pedestrian comfort and use; sidewalks accommodating street furniture of this kind should be at least 10 feet wide.

SE 5.2 Consider the provision of other street furnishings, especially along wide sidewalks (at least 15 feet wide) with the heaviest foot traffic; these may include drinking fountains, public restrooms, public telephones, newsstands, bicycle racks, planters, and kiosks.

SE 5.3 Coordinate the design and appearance of street furnishings and other street amenities to unify areas with a distinct identity; this is especially encouraged within the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, Pasadena Playhouse and Lake Avenue Sub-Districts.

SE 5.4 Reference the existing streetscape plans for the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, and Pasadena Playhouse Sub-Districts for detailed strategies in the treatment of street furniture and other street amenities within those areas.

SE 5.5 Encourage sidewalk dining, provided clear passage is maintained for pedestrians; reference detailed guidelines for sidewalk dining found in the Citywide Design Principles & Criteria.



Downtown Precedent: alley walkways provide evidence of the value of outdoor furniture

Citywide Design Criteria

- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- Protected Sidewalks: A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians.



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 6 Include Pedestrian-Scaled Lights

Intent Light affects the quality of place; harsh light feels uncomfortable and too little seems unsafe. The size and scale of light standards also affects the character of a street. Large, cobra head fixtures communicate that the street is the car's domain, whereas smaller, human-scaled fixtures suggest that the street is safe to walk. Street lighting should assure that Downtown sidewalks are the pedestrian's realm.

Recommendations SE 6.1 Incorporate pedestrian scaled fixtures that emit a warm light along streets and sidewalks; sidewalks should be well-lit.

SE 6.2 Direct lighting along sidewalks and pedestrian walks to produce minimal glare.

SE 6.3 Choose pole fixtures of a consistent type and size along a single block.

SE 6.4 Coordinate fixture design with other street amenities to unify areas with a distinct identity; this is especially encouraged within the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, Pasadena Playhouse, and Lake Avenue Sub-Districts.

SE 6.5 Reference the existing streetscape plans for the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, and Pasadena Playhouse Sub-Districts for detailed strategies in the treatment of street fixtures and other street amenities within those areas.

Citywide Design Criteria

- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- Protected Sidewalks: A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians.



Downtown Precedent: decorative street lamps increase pedestrian safety and comfort



Downtown Precedent: distinctive light fixtures promote local identity



District-wide Guidelines: Street Environment

Guideline SE 7 Assist Visitor Orientation

Intent People seek to readily understand and remember the physical layout of the places they inhabit. Landmarks and views help residents and visitors alike orient themselves and find their destinations. However, the presence of signs, maps, and other way-finding tools in the public realm is also important. Environmental graphics orient vehicles and pedestrians; point out places of interest; add visual interest to the street; contribute to a sense of place; and encourage further exploration of the area.



Downtown Precedent: signs identify entry into a special place

Recommendations SE 7.1 Consider the use of special paving and landscape treatment to give distinctive accents to areas with a unique identity; also consider special treatment to mark important intersections and identify notable historical and cultural landmarks.

SE 7.2 Utilize signs and environmental graphic systems to aid pedestrian and vehicular orientation and way-finding; identify special districts, historical and cultural landmarks, and local attractions.

SE 7.3 Provide a coordinated system of signs and maps that direct visitors to important public services and facilities; the public should be easily directed to government buildings, parks and plazas, transit stops, and public restrooms.



Downtown Precedent: distinctive graphics promote identity and enliven the street

SE 7.4 Coordinate environmental graphic systems with other street amenities to unify areas with a distinct identity; this is especially encouraged within the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, Pasadena Playhouse, and Lake Avenue Sub-Districts.

SE 7.5 Reference the existing streetscape plans for the Old Pasadena, Civic Center / Midtown, and Pasadena Playhouse Sub-Districts for detailed strategies in the treatment of environmental graphics, streetscape paving, and other street amenities within those areas.

Citywide Design Criteria

- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- Street Activity: A street should be an active and engaging place.



Downtown Precedent: directory signs orient pedestrians to local attractions



Section 9. PRIVATE REALM DESIGN GUIDELINES

• District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning

- 1. Encourage Integrated Site Planning**
- 2. Define Public Space**
- 3. Site Plazas and Courtyards Appropriately**
- 4. Create Comfortable Outdoor Rooms**
- 5. Maintain Landscape Traditions**
- 6. Control Vehicular Access and Parking**
- 7. Make Service Facilities Unobtrusive**

• District-wide Guidelines: Building Design

- 1. Respect Surrounding Character**
- 2. Mitigate Massing and Bulk**
- 3. Unify and Articulate Building Facades**
- 4. Activate the Street Edge**
- 5. Demarcate Building Entrances**
- 6. Encourage High-Quality Construction**
- 7. Emphasize Human-Scale Design**
- 8. Design Roof Silhouettes**
- 9. Require Compatible Parking Structures**

• District-wide Guidelines: Urban Residential

- 1. Respect Urban Development Patterns**
- 2. Create Appealing Street Scenes**
- 3. Incorporate Functional Communal Spaces**
- 4. Minimize Service and Parking Impacts**
- 5. Compose Attractive Residential Facades**

*Adopted by the City Council
October 21, 2002*