

Section 8. **PUBLIC REALM DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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

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

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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.*

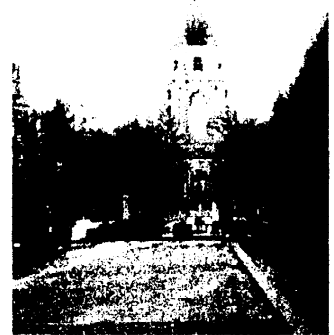
CC 4.5 *Limit pedestrian bridges to those that are least obtrusive; where provided, they should be of narrow width, open to the sky, and accessible to the public at all times.*

**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



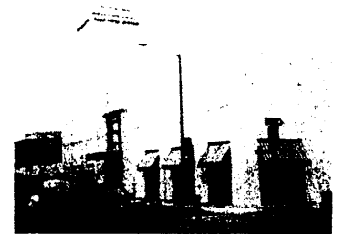
**Downtown Precedent:** prominent axial views focus attention on civic landmarks



**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.



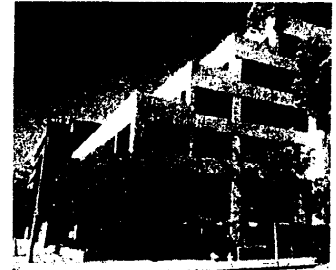
**Downtown Precedent:** infill developments reinforce the compact urban character

- 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*

**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning****Guideline SP 1 Encourage Integrated Site Planning**

**Intent** New development in the Central District should contribute to a coherent sense of the whole. This idea stresses: reinforcing the architectural context, placing a strong visual emphasis on the street, and supporting active public space. Likewise, developments that turn inward, result in left-over space or fail to address public life are inappropriate. Fulfillment of these wider design objectives requires an integrated approach to site planning. Buildings, parking, service access, plazas, and courtyards must each recognize the important relationship between public and private space.



**Downtown Precedent:** outdoor rooms are well-integrated to extend public space

- Recommendations**
- SP 1.1 Provide for the functional and visual integration of building, services, vehicular access and parking, and "outdoor rooms" such as plazas, fore-courts, interior courtyards, and passages.
- SP 1.2 Site parking and services so as to allow desired uses and activities; for instance, locate parking behind buildings or interior to a block to support pedestrian-oriented streets.
- SP 1.3 Discourage developments that are internally focused at the expense of an active street environment, or developments that result in "left-over" space.
- SP 1.4 Establish clear pedestrian connections on-site that are well-marked and gracious; direct pedestrians from surface or structured parking to buildings, streets, and public spaces.
- SP 1.5 Buffer adjacent sensitive land uses from undesirable impacts that may originate from a site; buffers may be landscape and/or architectural in character.



**Downtown Precedent:** gracious paths connect building, outdoor space and rear parking

**Citywide Design Criteria**

- **Integrated Planning:** A site should support the functional and visual integration of on-site facilities and uses.
- **Comfortable Access:** A site should establish an easy transition between exterior and interior space.



**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning****Guideline SP 2 Define Public Space**

**Intent** The life of Downtown is closely tied to the character of its public space. Collectively, new and old buildings through their location and orientation configure outdoor space; they determine its intimacy, spaciousness, continuity and enclosure. It is especially important to acknowledge the importance of streets as public space. Where the building meets the sidewalk should be a place of intense interaction; a consistent building line at or near the front property line contains activity, unifies the street, and establishes visual continuity along the street.



**Downtown Precedent:** a consistent building frontage defines the space of the street

**Recommendations** SP 2.1 Locate and orient buildings to positively define public streets and civic spaces, such as public plazas; maintain a continuous building street wall and in general limit spatial gaps to those necessary to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access.

SP 2.2 Build to a sufficient height at or near the property line to define the street edge and create a sense of enclosure.

SP 2.3 Encourage recessed main building or shop entrances consistent with a traditional "main street" design that is inviting and does not interrupt street and/or retail continuity.

SP 2.4 Permit "eroded" building corners at street intersections sufficient to promote visibility and to allow for the comfortable collection of people.

SP 2.5 Allow large developments to pull back from the street edge for plazas or gracious entry fore-courts, provided street continuity is not unduly interrupted along the majority of the block.

SP 2.6 Allow the integration of an arcade or colonnade along the sidewalk edge, provided street and/or retail continuity is not unduly interrupted.



**Downtown Precedent:** street facades are built at or near the edge of the sidewalk

**Citywide  
Design Criteria**

- Spatial Definition: A street should read as well-defined space.
- Functional Integration: A site should support the functional and visual integration of on-site facilities and uses.



**Downtown Precedent:** recessed entries welcome without interrupting retail continuity



**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning**

**Guideline SP 3 Site Plazas and Courtyards Appropriately**

**Intent** Plazas and courtyards are an integral part of the social life of Downtown. They promote civic gathering and can provide a quiet refuge from the urban environment. The more intimate-style courtyard is traditional in Pasadena. Nonetheless, the location, size, and design of a plaza, courtyard or garden must be carefully considered in relation to its surroundings. Outdoor space that is excessively large or incorrectly sited may lack spatial definition, weaken the continuity of the street, or detract from the existing network of open space.



**Downtown Precedent:** buildings and landscape shape functional outdoor rooms

**Recommendations** SP 3.1 Encourage the presence of well-defined outdoor space, such as on-site plazas, interior courtyards, patios, terraces and gardens; these are especially encouraged in association with major developments.

SP 3.2 Site outdoor spaces in accordance with the location and scale of adjacent streets, buildings, and uses; for instance, on-site plazas should not unduly interrupt the retail continuity of a street.

SP 3.3 Site outdoor spaces to establish a comfortable transition between the exterior and interior of a building.

SP 3.4 Locate plazas intended for public use at/or near street grade to promote physical and visual connection to the street; on-site plazas may serve as a well-defined transition from the street.

SP 3.5 Define and contain outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscape, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment.

SP 3.6 Dimension outdoor spaces to human occupation; they should be proportioned to their surroundings and envisioned use.

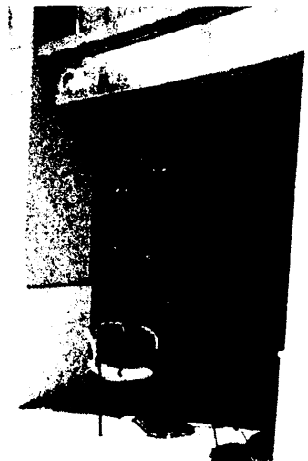
SP 3.7 Link adjoining outdoor spaces with comfortable paths and walks to create a network of spaces.



**Downtown Precedent:** outdoor spaces typically maintain a visual connection to the street

**Citywide Design Criteria**

- Outdoor Rooms: A site should have places amenable to outdoor activity and use.
- Comfortable Access: A site should establish a easy transition between exterior and interior space.



**Downtown Precedent:** spaces provide a transition between indoors and outdoors



**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning****Guideline SP 4 Create Comfortable Outdoor Rooms**

**Intent** Gathering places such as plazas and courtyards should be useful, as well as attractive; consider them as “outdoor rooms.” They should be comfortable places, amenable to social activity, with plenty of sunlight, shade trees and seating. Lush plants, warm and inviting materials, pleasing details, and quality construction suggest human occupation, physical comfort, and use.

- Recommendations**
- SP 4.1 *Make plazas and courtyards comfortable for human activity and social interaction – standing, sitting, talking, eating.*
- SP 4.2 *Create a pleasant microclimate, including shade from summer sun and access to winter sunlight; locate seating with consideration to noontime sun and shade.*
- SP 4.3 *Plant deciduous trees; shade and sunlight are most effectively regulated through the planting of deciduous trees that are sizeable at maturity, although this does not prohibit evergreens and palms.*
- SP 4.4 *Use plants, furniture and lighting to shape, embellish, enliven and give purpose to outdoor space; lush plants, warm materials and pleasing details are encouraged.*
- SP 4.5 *Include integrated landscape planters and/or freestanding pots of varying size.*
- SP 4.6 *Encourage the presence of uses that will activate outdoor space and complement street activity; consider locating retail businesses, outdoor cafes, and vendors within a plaza or around its perimeter.*
- SP 4.7 *Design outdoor space with safety in mind; on-site public plazas should promote visibility from the street, and provide architecturally compatible lighting to enhance nighttime security.*
- SP 4.8 *Consider adding a focal element, for instance, a sculpture, fountain, or art piece to outdoor space; civic art in outdoor plazas and courtyards is encouraged.*

**Citywide Design Criteria**

- **Outdoor Rooms:** A site should have places amenable to outdoor activity and use.
- **Human Occupation:** A site should include amenities for comfortable social interaction.



**Downtown Precedent:** outdoor furniture and plants invite social activity



**Downtown Precedent:** shade trees provide filtered sunlight



**Downtown Precedent:** fountains often provide an attractive focal element



**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning**

**Guideline SP 5 Maintain Landscape Traditions**

**Intent** Pasadena, including Downtown, has an outstanding tradition of Mediterranean landscape design. Plazas, intimate courtyards, terraces and gardens contribute to an exceptional outdoor setting, abundant with trees and floral displays. New development should continue to build upon these traditions and qualities found within the local landscape.

**Recommendations** SP 5.1 Utilize a landscape palette that reflects the history, culture, and climate of the Central District; in general, use a rich, yet coordinated palette of landscape materials to provide scale, texture, and color.

SP 5.2 Encourage the use of on-site planting, furniture, lighting and site details that respect the landscape character of the immediate area and support the design intentions of the building architecture.

SP 5.3 Provide year-round greenery; automatic watering systems and drought tolerant species are encouraged to promote water conservation and reduce maintenance concerns.

SP 5.4 Make prudent use of water as a defining element in the landscape; for instance, a fountain may provide the focal point of a courtyard or plaza.

SP 5.5 Provide opportunities for installation of civic art in the landscape; designer/artist collaborations are encouraged.

SP 5.6 Extend the landscape character of the site to surface parking lots; in particular, introduce mature shade trees.

SP 5.7 Restrict ground-level landscaping that conflicts with retail entrances and window displays.

**Citywide Design Criteria**

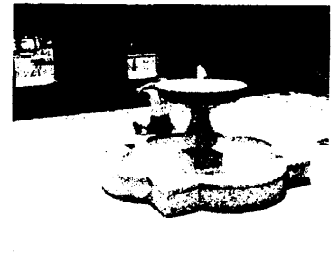
- Cultural Expression: A community should express local history and culture.
- Human Occupation: A site should include amenities for comfortable social interaction.



**Downtown Precedent:** year-round greenery recognizes the area's favorable climate



**Downtown Precedent:** intimate courtyards with lush plants enhance the urban setting



**Downtown Precedent:** landscape traditions include the soothing presence of water



**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning****Guideline SP 6 Control Vehicular Access and Parking**

**Intent** Parking is an integral component of the Downtown, requiring careful planning. However, it is important that the overwhelming visual presence of parked cars be minimal and that parking entrances not interrupt pedestrian and retail continuity. For example, curb cuts should be managed to reduce potential conflicts with pedestrians and to avoid interruptions in street tree and building rhythms. Parking should encourage and not prohibit an active pedestrian environment.

**Recommendations** SP 6.1 Encourage subterranean and structured parking; parking garages should be located to the interior of a block, where feasible.

SP 6.2 Incorporate space for retail and pedestrian-oriented uses along the street level facade of a parking garage, especially where pedestrian activity is most desired; parking garages should provide visual interest along the street;

SP 6.3 Site surface parking lots behind buildings or interior to a block, not to the front and preferably not to the side of a building in relation to the street; most importantly, surface parking is not to be located at a street corner.

SP 6.4 Minimize the number of curb cuts and access points to parking from the street; curb cuts should be consolidated and placed at mid-block, or provide alley access to service and parking, where feasible.

SP 6.5 Screen views of automobiles from public view and adjacent sensitive land uses, including adequate screening for parking garages; dense planting is often an effective screen for surface parking.

SP 6.6 Direct parking lot lighting away from adjacent properties, and use pedestrian-scaled fixtures that emit a warm light.

SP 6.7 Use landscaping to minimize the expansiveness of surface parking lots; shade surface parking and reduce heat build-up with rows of mature canopy trees.

**Citywide Design Criteria**

- Public Character: A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- Integrated Planning: A site should support the functional and visual integration of on-site facilities and uses.



**Downtown Precedent:** ground floor retail with a garage maintains sidewalk interest



**Downtown Precedent:** canopy trees shade parking lots and reduce their visual impact



**District-wide Guidelines: Site Planning**

**Guideline SP 7 Make Service Facilities Unobtrusive**

**Intent** The siting of necessary building elements such as service access and mechanical equipment should be given careful consideration. Often, poor planning and siting of these elements creates unsightly conditions that interrupt satisfactory public views. Planning in the early stages of development should consider the placement of service facilities and their effects on the public environment.



*Downtown Precedent: the rear of the building provides access to a screened service area*

**Recommendations** SP 7.1 Consider service facilities as an integral part of the site plan; avoid siting service areas and mechanical equipment as an afterthought.

SP 7.2 Locate service, loading, and storage areas away from public streets and public spaces, as far as feasible.

SP 7.3 Restrict service, loading, and storage areas from directly facing public streets, residential neighborhoods, or other important civic spaces; where possible, take service access along an alley.

SP 7.4 Buffer adjacent sensitive land uses from the undesirable impacts of service facilities; use landscape or cohesive architectural treatment to screen service access and facilities.

SP 7.5 Screen roof-mounted mechanical equipment from public view and locate it away from the street edge; reference the Citywide Design Guidelines for Screening of Rooftop Equipment.



*Discouraged: visible trash, service and parking areas detract from the street*

**Citywide Design Criteria**

- **Public Character:** A street should readily communicate that it is public space.
- **Integrated Planning:** A site should support the functional and visual integration of on-site facilities and uses.





**District-wide Guidelines: Building Design**

**Guideline BD 1 Respect Surrounding Character**

**Intent** Contemporary ways of building can potentially create visual conflicts with older buildings due to differences in scale, massing, and degrees of articulation. On the other hand, new buildings are occasionally clothed in exteriors that mimic past architectural styles. This nostalgic misrepresentation confuses the relationship between buildings over time, devaluing and questioning the authenticity of true historic structures. Pasadena emphasizes the notion of historical continuity – the relationship of built structures over time. This relationship expresses diversity within a coherent whole, reinforcing the unique and evolving historical and cultural character of the City.



**Downtown Precedent:** scale and massing of new buildings relate to historic structures

- Recommendations**
- BD 1.1 Design visually attractive buildings that add richness and variety to the Downtown environment, including creative contemporary architectural solutions.*
  - BD 1.2 Integrate new development with its surroundings, emphasizing functional and visual continuity while admitting individual expression.*
  - BD 1.3 Establish a harmonious transition between newer and older buildings; compatible design should respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.*
  - BD 1.4 Complement the architectural character of an adjacent historic building or area; however, imitation of historical styles is discouraged.*
  - BD 1.5 Avoid mimicry of historical architectural styles; new buildings should not appear to have been constructed during a past era, and references to period architecture should be interpreted in a contemporary manner.*
  - BD 1.6 Discourage excessive and overly gratuitous ornamentation that detracts from the visual clarity of Downtown’s historic architecture.*
  - BD 1.7 Employ design strategies and incorporate architectural elements that reinforce Downtown’s unique qualities; in particular, Downtown’s best building’s tend to support an active street life.*



**Downtown Precedent:** design elements and materials respect historic surroundings

**Citywide Design Criteria**

- Contextual Fit: A building should fit with its surroundings.
- Three-Dimensional Quality: A building should add interest and variety to its surroundings.

