

Chapter 10 – General Design Standards and Guidelines

This chapter defines general design standards and guidelines for the Downtown Specific Plan area. This chapter is organized as follows:

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10.1 APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this chapter apply to all development in the Downtown Specific Plan area.

The design standards and guidelines in this chapter apply in addition to the Area-specific development and design standards and guidelines in the preceding chapters and in addition to adopted City policies and Zoning Code requirements for landscaping, parking and trash enclosures.

10.2 PURPOSE

The development and design standards and guidelines for Downtown Martinez are intended to provide property owners, merchants and their designers with basic development and design criteria that are intended to reinforce the desired building and area character.

The goals of the design standards and guidelines are as follows:

- a) Provide basic design requirements for all buildings in the Downtown, promoting design creativity and variation while ensuring consistency in building scale, proportion and pedestrian orientation.
- b) Establish clear and usable standards, guidelines and criteria for development.
- c) Protect and enhance historic buildings and utilize historical building forms and styles to create future buildings.

10.3 SITE DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

New development in the Downtown Specific Plan area should be compatible with surrounding development and historic structures, as well as pedestrian-friendly. The street environment should also enhance pedestrian safety and comfort through a sensitive application of street furnishings, benches, enriched paving, and lighting. This will strengthen the historic character while simultaneously providing a functional environment.

10.3.1 Additions, rehabilitation and new structures

- a) New structures shall be sited in a manner compatible with surrounding development and with the façade facing the public street designed in a manner that enhances the pedestrian environment.
- b) Additions shall be compatible with the existing building in scale, materials, and design.
- c) Wherever possible, mature trees shall be preserved or relocated on site.
- d) New structures and parking areas shall enhance existing pedestrian connections to existing outdoor pedestrian spaces, such as sidewalks and plazas, and create new connections where none exist.

10.3.2 Building Access

- a) Main entries to buildings shall be clearly demarcated, visible and accessible from the street and/or pedestrian corridors. Secondary entries may be from parking areas. Entries shall not occupy more than one third of the ground floor façade.
- b) Retail entrances shall not be recessed more than five feet and should be located no more than 50 feet apart.
- c) Primary entrances to corner building shall be at corners wherever possible.

10.3.3 Parking and Site Access

All parking and service/loading areas shall be developed per the requirements of Section 22.36 of the Zoning Code. In addition:

- a) If provided, on-site parking shall be consolidated in one area rather than wrapping around the building.
- b) Driveways shall be kept to a minimum and shared site access is encouraged.
- c) All service/loading areas shall be screened from view from public streets and walkways and removed from pedestrian oriented areas. These screens shall be located at the setback line to maintain continuity of setback patterns within the district.
- d) All parking areas shall be landscaped per the requirements of Section 22.36.080 of the Zoning Code.

10.3.4 Trash and Utility Enclosures

- a) Trash storage areas and utility structures should be located to the rear of the site and, where possible, screened from view from public streets and walkways and removed from pedestrian oriented areas.
- b) Colors and materials used to enclose these elements should be compatible with all other buildings on site.

10.3.5 Mechanical Equipment Screening

- a) All roof-mounted mechanical equipment should be screened from view of pedestrians and users of adjacent buildings by either a building parapet or mechanical penthouse.
- b) The parapet should be designed as an integral part of the building. Mechanical penthouses shall be designed and painted to blend in with their visual background.
- c) Wooden screens should not be permitted.

10.3.6 Site Landscaping

- a) In general, landscaping should be used to soften large building walls and parking areas and enhance building entrances.
- b) Site area devoted to landscaping should be greater than 5% of the overall parcel area, except as noted within the Downtown Core.
- c) The use of flowering vines is encouraged along fence lines, perimeter walls and blank building elevations.
- d) Both deciduous and evergreen trees should be planted to provide variety in textures, color and form.
- e) Canopy trees to provide shade are encouraged in parking lots and front setback areas.
- f) Colorful accent plants should be used to enhance entrances and add interest at special locations. These may be provided in pots, planter boxes, and hanging baskets as well as ground plantings.
- g) Landscaping in and around parking areas should not exceed three feet in height, with the exception of trees.
- h) Stretches of screening (landscaping, walls, or hedges) longer than 45 feet should include accent points using a different element or plant material or combination of the two to create a visual break in the screening material
- i) Hedges and other landscape screening materials should consist of evergreen plant materials.
- j) In addition to the standards for water conservation contained in Chapter 22.35 of the Zoning Code, general criteria for plant material selection also include compatibility with the building architecture and low maintenance needs.

10.4 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

New development in Downtown Martinez should express historical architectural characteristics. New projects need not be literal replicas of existing buildings but should generally have a traditional appearance. Designers should assimilate and reinterpret building massing, materials and details from existing structures dating from Downtown's period of greatest historical significance, roughly 1850-1930. This promotes a variety of building styles, which contributes to the interest and vitality of Downtown, while maintaining traditional building forms that will reinforce the setting of Downtown's many historic buildings.

10.4.1 Massing, Form and Scale (All new structures, including additions)

- a) The size and mass of new structures, including additions, should be in relation to surrounding structures.
- b) Architectural features should reflect or be compatible with the character-defining architectural features of surrounding structures or with the predominant architectural styles within the Area.
- c) To create visual interest, where appropriate, varied roof or parapet heights and/or shifts in wall plane should be used.
- d) Building corners may be emphasized by the use of architectural elements or entries.
- e) Building articulation can be accomplished with the placement of windows and entries, volume changes, significant color and material changes, and the creation of shadow textures with trellises and overhangs.

10.4.2 Building Façade and Elevation Design (All new structures, including additions)

- a) Building walls that are visible from a public street, major pedestrian corridor, or public open space should include architectural features such as windows, arcades, canopies, and trim to create visual interest.
- b) Street-facing building façades should not have a section of blank wall exceeding 30 linear feet without being interrupted by a window or entry.
- c) At least 60 percent of the linear length of street-facing non-residential façades, on each story, should contain windows, doors, or arcades. Clerestory windows or other windows with sills more than four feet above the exterior grade do not count toward the 60 percent requirement.
- d) The appearance of building mass may be reduced through the use of arcades, courtyards, pergolas and stepping stories back above the ground level.

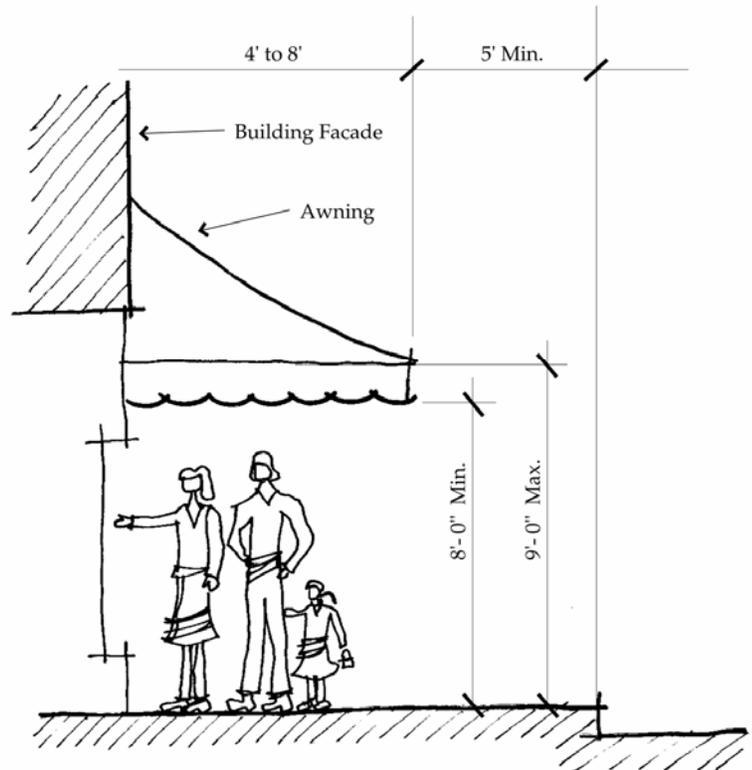
- e) Windows and doors should be proportioned to and integrated with the façade modulation. Establish clear vertical and/or horizontal hierarchy and patterns in the placement of openings and assemblies.
- f) Details or elements should be integral to the design and reflect the structural or material integrity of the building, rather than appearing added on.
- g) Color and material changes should be used to add interest and reduce a building's apparent scale.

10.4.3 Architectural Elements

- a) Retail storefronts should have large display windows oriented toward the public street or major pedestrian corridors and a simple entry door centrally located on the building façade.
- b) Retail storefronts should be broken up by architectural features approximately every 25 feet.
- c) Display windows should provide a clear view of store merchandise and a view into the business interior. To achieve this purpose, at least two-thirds of the window surface should remain clear and free of obstructions. This zone should be between four and eight feet from the base of the façade. Ground floor wall sections without windows should not be more than five feet in width for retail uses.
- d) Display windows should consist of a single pane of glass. When required to be divided into smaller sections, windows should have clear silicone vertical joints or minimally sized glazing bars or muntins, used to enhance the architectural style.
- e) A bulkhead between 15 and 24 inches in height should be provided at the base of the storefront display window. However, new storefront buildings may use floor-to-ceiling display windows if the design is compatible with surrounding architecture and appropriate to the area.
- f) Where pilasters will enhance the architectural style of the building, they should be used on the façade to create a visual frame. Pilasters may extend the full height of the building or be limited to the storefront level.
- g) Transom windows may be provided above the display windows. The transom window height depends on the overall ceiling height and ranges from eighteen inches to three feet. Transom windows may have clear, tinted or etched glass.
- h) Awnings should not cover the storefront piers or pilasters and should be divided into sections to reflect the major vertical division of the façade. The awning should be mounted such that its valence is between eight and nine feet above the sidewalk with a projection of between four and eight feet from the building face, but no closer than five feet to the street curb. Retractable awnings are encouraged, but barrel-shaped awnings are discouraged.
- i) The upper level windows should be symmetrically arranged. The number of windows should be based on the storefront modulation at the street level. The windows may be combined into pairs, triples or bands. These windows should be articulated with delineated sills, lintels, or frames so as to create shadow lines.

- j) Building corners should be enhanced with higher massing and entries.
- k) The cornice should enhance the architectural style of the building. A brick-front building may have a corbelled cornice. A plaster front building may have a stone still or terra cotta or ceramic tile detail at the parapet line.
- l) Windows should be clear glazing. Reflective or tinted glass is not permitted.
- m) New buildings may have flat or sloping roofs, depending on which is most compatible with the architectural style of the building and others in the area. Parapets should appear integrated with the building and must always include a cap and corner detail to create a shadow line. Mansard roofs are discouraged.
- n) Towers, bay windows and cupolas are dramatic features of Victorian and Edwardian residential architecture. Appropriate contemporary expression of these elements is encouraged in new buildings. Particular care should be taken in using these elements in terms of scale, proportion, and architectural compatibility with the rest of the building.

GUIDELINES FOR AWNINGS



10.4.4 Colors

- a) The colors chosen should accentuate the architectural details of the building and be consistent with the architectural style.
- b) In general, the building should incorporate a minimum of three colors: a base color on the majority of the building, which is often the lightest color; a major trim color to accentuate certain elements such as the cornice, window frames, and storefront bulkhead; and a minor trim color for window sashes and doors. In addition, an accent color may be used to highlight small details and should contrast with the base and trim colors. Accent colors should be used sparingly.
- c) Stone and masonry should not be painted. Other colors on the façade should be chosen to complement the colors of exposed materials.

- d) Colors for graphics, such as signs, should be related to the colors used on the building. The accent, major or minor trim colors may be used for signs.
- e) Awning colors should be compatible with the building colors. Darker, saturated colors that pick up the highlights of the building colors are preferred. Simple stripes or tweeds are allowed.
- f) The maximum number of colors, including both building and signage colors, should not exceed six.

10.4.7 Site Lighting

- a) Lighting fixtures should be compatible with the architectural character of the project and surrounding area. While some nondescript fixtures may be appropriate, significant use should be made of fixtures that have architectural value and accent the building and site.
- b) All lighting fixtures, including spotlights, electrical reflectors, and other means of illuminating signs, structures, landscaping, parking, loading, and similar areas, should be focused, directed, and arranged to prevent horizontal glare or direct illumination on adjoining property or streets. Lighting shall be directed toward walls and landscaping to avoid shining light up into the sky or onto an adjacent property. No lamp or lens may be visible. No mercury vapor utility yard lights or other light fixtures with high intensity discharge lamps or bulbs which are not designed to limit or control light direction, or which do not shield the light source from view of adjacent properties, should be permitted.
- c) Indirect illumination of neighboring residential properties or uses by any on-site lighting should not exceed 0.5 foot candles at the property line, as measured from the adjacent grade to a height of 14 feet.

10.4.8 Architectural Lighting

- a) Architectural - Accent lighting of architectural features is encouraged to highlight building massing and enhance the pedestrian environment. Accent lighting should not be a source of glare, reflected glare, or excessive light, especially when viewed from residences, streets, walkways, or open spaces. Neon lighting does not qualify as, and is not permitted for, accent lighting.
- b) Building entries - Building entries with high activity levels shall be illuminated. Appropriate treatments include: accentuating building entries with light, allowing the building interior light to glow through glazing, or using decorative lighting fixtures to announce entries.
- c) Service areas - Building-mounted downlight fixtures, in combination with pole fixtures, are preferred for the illumination of building service areas. Such fixtures do not cause glare or light leakage beyond the service areas.
- d) Landscaping and furnishing - Uplighting is recommended for all landscaping and furnishings (in both public and private areas) that require accenting (such as specimen trees, shrubs, and sculptural features).

- e) Landscaped walkways and plazas- Landscaped walkways and other pedestrian paths should be lit by pole or bollard type fixtures that are human scale, typically not to exceed 16 feet or 4 feet in height, respectively. Lighting bollards should have a colored metal finish and a diameter of approximately eight inches. Around the light source near the top of the bollard, horizontal louvers should be used to stylistically complement the luminaries and direct light downward.

10.4.9 Security Grilles

- a) Visible security grilles are prohibited.
- b) Existing security grilles in the Downtown Core District should be removed.

10.4.10 Sidewalk Dining

- a) Sidewalk dining is encouraged to bring life and vitality to streets in the Downtown Core. On Pedestrian-Priority Streets, with a valid sidewalk encroachment permit, portable tables and chairs may be placed on the sidewalk in front of any business serving food or beverages for on-site consumption, provided that an unobstructed pedestrian path of at least 5 feet in width is maintained and that tables and chairs are removed at the end of each business day.
- b) Alcohol may not be served or consumed within the sidewalk encroachment area without prior approval of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC) and compliance with City and ABC requirements for a delineated physical barrier enclosing the encroachment area.
- c) A sidewalk encroachment permit is required for the erection of any permanent structures in the public right of way, or for the use, in a public right of way, of tables, chairs, umbrellas, fences, barriers, portable heaters or other appurtenances for sidewalk dining.
- d) In new construction or reconstruction, the design of dedicated outdoor seating areas that do not encroach upon the public right of way is encouraged. Such outdoor eating areas shall be open to and visible from an adjacent street, courtyard, creek or park.

10.5 ADDITIONAL STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

10.5.1 Applicability

The provisions of this section apply to new residential development in the Downtown Specific Plan area. These standards are in addition to the development standards and guidelines of the applicable Specific Plan and zone District.

10.5.2 Purpose

Historically, Downtown Main Streets included a mix of shops, offices and restaurants at the street level, with residences on side streets and upstairs. This pattern created a rich mix of uses and allowed urban activity to carry on well into the evening. In the 20th century, Downtowns were increasingly zoned for one activity only, namely business, and were shut down after six in the evening. In recent years, cities have once again begun to encourage residential uses within their Downtowns and thus tap into the potential of increased economic activity by extending the usability of Downtown resources into the evenings and weekends. Residential uses are encouraged in the Downtown, including multifamily, townhouse and live/work development, along with the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic structures for residential uses or mixed use.

10.5.3 Design Standards

A. Housing Types

A diverse range of housing types is permitted and encouraged within each land use designation. At the same time, some housing types may be inappropriate to certain areas. The housing types allowable in each Specific Plan District, where residential use is otherwise permitted by the applicable district use regulations, are shown in the following table:

Table 10-1. Allowable Residential Types by Plan District
(where otherwise permitted by applicable district use regulations)

Building Type	DISTRICT			
	Downtown Core	Downtown Neighborhood	Downtown Shoreline	Grandview
<i>Single-Family Standard Lot</i>		*	*	*
<i>Single-Family Small Lot</i>		*	*	*
<i>Duplex</i>	*	*	*	*
<i>Green Court</i>			*	
<i>Townhouse/Rowhouse</i>	*	*	*	*
<i>Live/Work Units</i>	*		*	
<i>Apartments/Condominiums (including Mixed-Use)</i>	*	*	*	
<i>Secondary Units</i>		*	*	*

B. Development Standards

The development standards for each residential building type are specified in each zoning District.

C. Building Orientation

- (1) Buildings should have a strong street presence, with public entrances and front doors oriented toward the street or to a public pathway adjacent to open space.
- (2) Privacy between units should be maintained by locating windows away from windows in adjacent units.

D. Vehicular Access and Parking

- (1) All garages should be set back at least 20’ from the front property line to provide an adequate parking apron and should be set back from the residence’s front façade a minimum of 5’.
- (2) For single-family homes and duplexes, front-loading garages should not make up more than 50% of the street-facing width of the house. For townhomes and green court homes, the garage shall be accessed from the rear.
- (3) For multi-family residential, garages should not make up more than 33% of any street-facing façade, and rear-accessed garages or interior parking lots are encouraged.
- (4) If parking is provided within the building footprint, the first floor of the residential units should not occur more than four feet above the finished grade level. Parking may need to be lowered partially or completely below grade. Finished grades of front entrances may be raised by up to four feet to accommodate this arrangement. These parking areas should not be visible from the street.

E. Entrances: Porches and Entries for Single-Family and Attached Single-Family

All front entrance areas should be easily recognizable from the street and include a welcoming architectural feature such as a porch or covered entry. This is critical not only for practical purposes, but because an important element of residential environments is the relationship of the private home to the public street and sidewalk.



All porches should be covered and form an integral feature of the building.

1. *Porches* should be covered and should extend at least 10’ along the front wall of the house, not including the garage face. The minimum depth of the porch should be 6’. Porches may be raised or at ground level. Porch floors should be a hard surface material such as concrete, wood, tile, brick, or cut or flat stone.

Porches should be an integral architectural feature with the main structure. All porches should incorporate railings, either 24” min. ornamental or code height when required by UBC. Porches may extend up to 5 feet into the front setback.

2. *Entries* should be accompanied by a projecting overhead element such as a shed, arch, or gable which provides roof coverage and weather protection. Entries should be a minimum of 6' wide and 4' deep, with floors of a hard surface material such as concrete, wood, tile, brick, or flat or cut stone. Entries should be architecturally integrated with the main structure.



Entries should have a projecting overhead element to provide weather protection.