Downtown Urban Center

Design Standards

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I. DEFINITIONS/ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

These words shall have the following meanings for the purposes of these guidelines:

a. Articulation - in art and architecture, is first of all a joint. Expanding from that definition, articulation is also a method of styling the joints in the formal elements of architectural design. Through degrees of articulation, each part is united with the whole work by means of a joint in such a way that the joined parts are put together in styles ranging from exceptionally distinct jointing to the opposite of high articulation—fluidity and continuity of joining. In highly articulated works, each part is defined precisely and stands out clearly. The articulation of a building reveals how the parts fit into the whole by emphasizing each part separately.

b. Belt Course - A molding or projecting course running horizontally along the face of a building.

c. Boxed Cabinet Signs - is a permanent sign that is mounted on the face of a building that is roughly rectangular in shape and provides for internal illumination and changing the message of the sign by replacing a single transparent or translucent material such as a Plexiglas/lexan face. This definition is meant to distinguish between a cabinet sign that is essentially a rectangular box and one that follows the outlines of the letters of the sign, or an "outline cabinet sign."

d. Canopy - means a cover over a sidewalk providing protection from the rain, which is constructed of durable, permanent materials.

e. Cornice - upper section of an entablature, a projecting shelf along the top of a wall often supported by brackets.

f. Director - means the director of the Auburn Pplanning and Ddevelopment Ddepartment.

g. Neo-traditional – Design concept that promotes a more livable and alive lively community for residents; more sustainable since it preserves land by encouraging more compact development and reduces air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions by creating new opportunities to walk and bike rather than using a car; and mixed-use with a combination of commercial and residential development.

h. Outlined Cabinet Signs - is a permanent sign that is mounted on the face of a building that roughly follows the shape of the text of the sign and provides for internal illumination. This definition is meant to distinguish between a cabinet sign that follows the outlines of the letters of the sign and one that is essentially a rectangular box or a "boxed cabinet sign." An "outlined cabinet sign" will be treated more like an "individual letter sign" where the area of the sign is calculated based on the actual outlined shape of the sign.

i. Parking, structured - means parking contained within an enclosed building either part of or designed to appear like it is part of the larger building complex, or a freestanding structure devoted exclusively to above-grade parking.

j. Personal service uses – means uses such as hair salons, nail salons, custom tailoring, dry cleaning, and similar related uses. Personal service uses can also include banks.

k. Plinth - a block used as the base of a column or other upright support.

l. Public art - means any form of painting, mural, mosaic, sculpture, or other work of art, so long as it can be appraised as a work of art and its value as such documented, displayed on the exterior of a building, at or near the pedestrian entrance, or on a public plaza, and visible to users of the public right-of-way at all times.

m. Plaza - means an open space that is visible and accessible to the public at all times predominantly open to the sky, and for use principally by people, as opposed to merely a setting for the building.

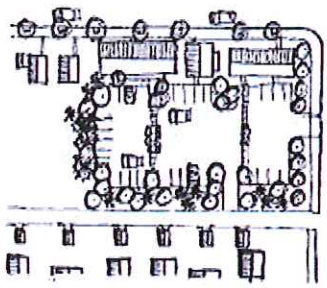
n. Street level retail - means uses providing goods and services, including food and drink, adjacent to, visible from, and directly accessible from the public sidewalk.

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO SITE DESIGN

1. PARKING LOTS AND GARAGES

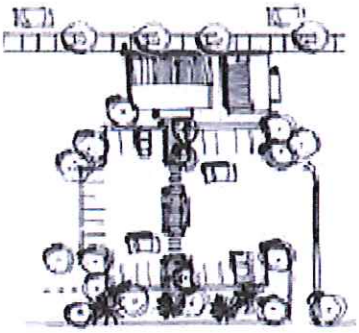
Intent: Reduce the visual impact of surface parking lots and garages

A. General
   1. Parking shall be located over, under, behind, or to the side of buildings. Parking structures are strongly encouraged.
   2. All parking lots shall meet the design and construction standards of ACC 18.52 unless modified herein.
      - Parking stall standards for 90 degree stalls in structured parking facilities shall be 18 feet in length and 9 feet in width. All other dimensions shall meet ACC 18.52.
   3. Compact parking stalls shall be permitted but only 30% of the parking provided may be dedicated to compact parking.



B. Screening and Landscaping
   1. Surface parking lots consisting of ten or more stalls shall feature landscaped planter beds at a ratio of one to every six (6) stalls. Each planter bed shall include at least one tree, a minimum caliper of two (2) inches at the time of planting.
   2. The minimum planter size shall be 100 square feet. Planters shall be protected by concrete curbs and shall also feature shrubs and/or groundcover.
   3. Surface parking lots located adjacent to any street (excluding alleys) shall be screened by one or a combination of the following:
      a. Low walls made of decorative concrete, masonry, or other similar material, not exceeding a maximum height of 30 inches.
      b. Raised planter walls planted with a minimum of 80% evergreen shrubs, not exceeding a total height of 30 inches
      c. Landscape plantings consisting of trees (of which at least 80% are deciduous) and shrubs and groundcover materials (of which at least 80% are evergreen).
      d. All plant material used for parking lot screening shall provide clear views between 30 inches and eight (8) feet above the ground surface, for visibility and safety.
      e. Planting areas shall be a minimum of five (5) feet in width and shall be irrigated.

PARKING LOTS AND GARAGES (Cont.)



C. Pedestrian Connections
   1. Pedestrian connections not less than five (5) feet wide shall be provided through parking lots to building entrances, sidewalks and/or transit stops.
   2. Pedestrian connections should be clearly defined by at least two of the following:
      a. Six (6) inch vertical curb in combination with a raised walkway;
      b. Textured paving, including across vehicular lanes, such as unit pavers, stamped and scored concrete;
      c. Bollards;
      d. Trellis;
      e. Continuous landscape area at least three (3) feet wide and at least on one side of the walkway;
      f. Pedestrian-scale lighting to aid in wayfinding.

D. Width / Spacing of Driveways
   1. Driveways should not exceed 24 feet in width at the property line. Distance between curb cuts should not be less than 100 feet, measured from the outer edge of the driveway aprons.
   2. The sidewalk pattern and material shall continue across the driveway.

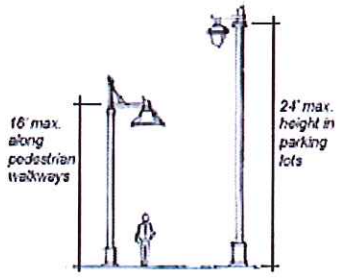
Pedestrian connection through parking lot

2. SHIELDED LIGHTING

Intent: Ensure that exterior site lighting contributes to the character of the site such as accentuating architectural features (e.g., building entrances) and does not disturb adjacent development

A. Only City-approved standard fixtures shall be used for public sidewalk lighting.

B. All site lighting shall be shielded from producing off-site glare, either through exterior shields or through optical design inside the fixture, so that the direction of the light is downward.



C. The maximum height allowed for parking lot lighting is 24 feet. The maximum height along pedestrian walkways is 16 feet.

D. Site lighting should be appropriate to create adequate visibility at night, evenly distributed to increase security, and coordinated with adjacent landscaping to avoid casting long shadows.

E. Incorporate electrical service into lighting fixtures for seasonal ornamental lighting.

3. SCREENING OF TRASH / SERVICE AREAS

Intent: screen trash storage, loading and service areas from public view

A. Trash and service areas shall be placed away from streets.

B. All service, loading and trash collection areas shall be screened by a combination of masonry walls and planting, with similar character to the design of the building it serves. If landscaping cannot be accomplished due to existing site conditions (e.g. existing parking areas) then the Planning Director may approve artistic features on the face of the masonry wall in place of landscaping.

C. Loading and service areas shall not face any residential areas, unless no other location is feasible. Effort should be made to buffer impacts to residential areas.

4. PUBLIC PLAZAS

Intent: If included in the development, ensure public plazas are readily accessible for use and offer a pleasant environment

A. Public plazas must abut and be within three (3) feet in elevation of a public sidewalk. Ramps shall be provided consistent with ADA standards.

B. At least ten (10) % of the plaza area shall be planted with trees and other vegetation.

C. Plazas shall include adequate lighting, allow for penetration of sunlight, and provide seating in the form of low walls, benches and/or tables and chairs.

D. Accessory site features such as, waste receptacles, street furniture and movable planters shall be of compatible design to the main building served by the plaza.

1. ENTRANCES

Intent: ensure that entrances are easily identifiable and accessible from streets and sidewalks

A. Main building entrances should be oriented to the property line abutting the primary street rather than to a parking lot.

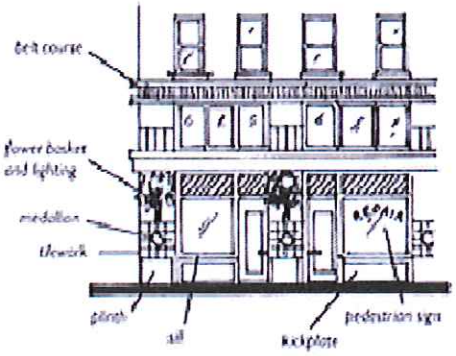
B. Locate primary entrances so that they are visible from the public right-of-way. The entry should be marked by architecturally prominent elements such as canopies, ornamental lighting fixtures and/or fixed seating that offer visual prominence and a sense of safety.

2. GROUND LEVEL DETAILS

Intent: reinforce the character of the streetscape

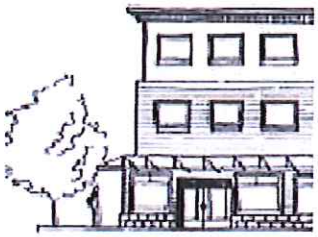
A. Street-oriented façades of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall be designed to be pedestrian-friendly through the inclusion of at least four of the following elements:

1. Kickplates for storefront windows;
2. Projecting window sills;
3. Pedestrian scale signs;
4. Canopies;
5. Plinths for columns;
6. Containers for seasonal plantings;
7. Ornamental tilework;
8. Medallions;
9. Belt courses;
10. Lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets;
11. An element, as approved by the City, which meets the intent of this section.



3. BASE / MIDDLE / TOP

Intent: primarily emphasize the street level, but also create a visually interesting skyline



A. Buildings above 30 feet in height should distinguish a "base" at ground level using articulation and materials such as stone, masonary, or decorative concrete.

A. The "top" of the building should emphasize a distinct profile or outline with elements such as a projecting parapet, cornice, upper level setback or pitched roofline. Materials shall be coordinated within the project.

B. The "middle" of the building should be distinguished by a change in materials or color, windows, balconies, stepbacks and signage.

. UPPER LEVEL SETBACK

Intent: reduce the apparent bulk of multi-story buildings and maintain pedestrian scale

A. Building façades abutting streets shall have an upper level setback at a height 25-40 feet above grade, with a minimum depth of ten (10) feet.

B. New structures that have frontage on Main Street shall be designed to reflect the scale and rhythm of historic Main Street and retain the Main Street pedestrian scale.

5. TREATMENT OF BLANK WALLS

Intent: reduce the visual impact of blank walls by providing visual interest

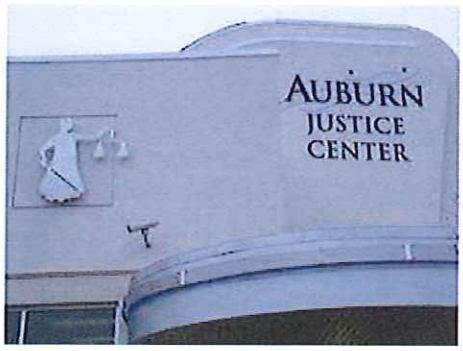
A. Blank walls visible from the public street longer than 30 feet shall incorporate two (2) or more of the following features:
   1. Vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, ground cover and/or vines adjacent to the wall surface;
   2. Artwork, such as bas-relief sculpture, murals, or trellis structures
   3. Seating area with special paving, lighting fixtures and seasonal plantings; and/or
   4. Architectural detailing, reveals, contrasting materials, or other special interest, consistent with character of the downtown.

6. USE OF NEON

Intent: encourage the use of neon as an architectural embellishment in keeping with the character of downtown.

A. Neon may be allowed to emphasize unique building features.

B. Neon may be used as artwork or as graphic symbols that portray the nature of the business.



7. PARKING STRUCTURES

Intent: reduce the visual impact of structured parking located above grade

A. At ground level, free-standing parking structures shall comply with guidelines addressed under 'Ground Level Details.'

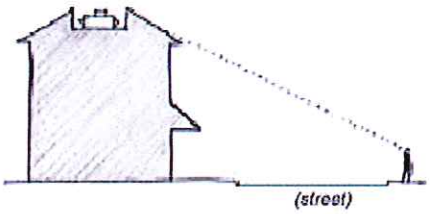
B. Upper levels of structured parking should be screened or treated architecturally by two or more of the following:
   1. Roughly square openings rather than horizontal
   2. Planting designed to grow on the façade
   3. Louvers
   4. Expanded metal panels
   5. Decorative metal grills
   6. Spandrel (opaque) glass
   7. An element, as approved by the City, which meets the intent of this section.

C. Lighting fixtures within garages should be screened from view from the street.

D. In order to provide a safer environment, parking structure illumination should be designed to a maximum uniformity ratio (proportion of average to minimum illumination) of 4:1.

8. ROOFTOP EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND SCREENING

Intent: screen rooftop mechanical and communications equipment from the ground level of nearby streets and residential areas



A. Mechanical equipment shall be screened. Screening shall be integrated with the architecture of the building.

B. An access easement to rooftops shall be provided to the City, which will allow the installation of devices for wireless coverage and maintenance of those devices. The applicant shall also provide access to power on rooftops to be used for City wireless facilities. The parameters of the access easement and location of devices shall be approved by the City. Any cabling and/or power shall be secured so the

Visible communication equipment is undesirable

facilities are not damaged by other activity on the roof.

C. The applicant shall install an outdoor speaker system and AM receiver, to receive the City's Main Street radio signal, on any new commercial structure within the Downtown Urban Center zone. The property owner and/or building owner shall be responsible for the outdoor speaker system and any repairs or maintenance.

D. Utility equipment such as power and gas meters shall be painted to match the structure.

E. Private utility cabinets (e.g. Comcast, PSE) shall be screened with landscaping where feasible.

*GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO **ALL DEVELOPMENT** IN DOWNTOWN*

Sign Design

1. LANDMARK SIGNS

Intent: preserve the unique character of the downtown

A. Retain existing historic signs (as determined by the City) that feature the character of the area, wherever possible.

2. INTEGRATION WITH ARCHITECTURE

Intent: ensure that signage is a part of the overall design of a project and not additive or an afterthought

A. The design plans for buildings and sites shall identify locations and sizes for future signs. As tenants install signs, such signs shall be in conformance with an overall sign program that allows for advertising which fits with the architectural character, proportions, and details of the development. The sign program shall indicate location, size, and general design.

B. New signs shall not project above the roof, parapet or exterior wall unless part of an integral architectural feature. Signs mounted on a roof are not allowed.

3. CREATIVITY

Intent: encourage interesting, creative and unique approaches to the design of signage

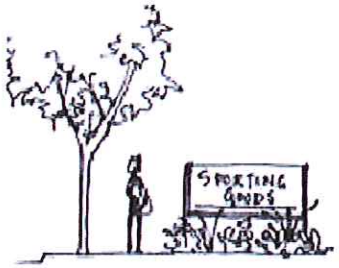
A. Signs should be highly graphic in form, expressive and individualized. Signs should convey the product or service offered by the business in a bold, graphic form

B. If a projecting sign is designed by a graphic design professional and includes a non-verbal, three-dimensional symbol that succinctly conveys the nature of the business and constitutes a dominant proportion of the overall design, the sign may be allowed to exceed the maximum area otherwise allowed by 50%.

4. GROUND SIGNS

Intent: ensure that signs are not principally oriented to automobile traffic

A. All freestanding signs shall be ground (monument) signs no higher than five (5) feet. Pole signs are prohibited.



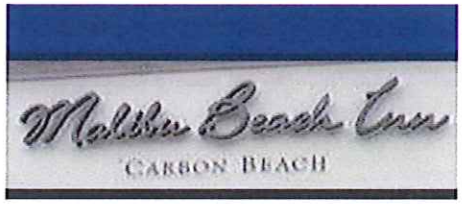
B. The area around the base of any ground sign shall be planted with shrubs and seasonal flowers.

C. Backlit signs are permitted if the sign meets all other standards for signage in this document and Chapter 18.29.

D. Internally-lit signs are p permitted when located adjacent and oriented to Auburn Way North/Auburn Way South street frontages and only with electronic message center signs in accordance with Auburn City Code Chapter 18.56 Signs. If an internally lit sign is utilized, the sign shall also conform to all other applicable standards for changing message center signs as described in this same chapter.

E. Boxed cabinet signs are prohibited in the Downtown Urban Center zone.

F. Outlined cabinet signs are permitted only if the sign meets all other standards for signage in this document and Chapter 18.29.



ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR

DEVELOPMENT SITES ADJACENT TO

PEDESTRIAN STREETS

1. LIMITATIONS ON DRIVEWAYS

Intent: maintain a continuous sidewalk by minimizing driveway access

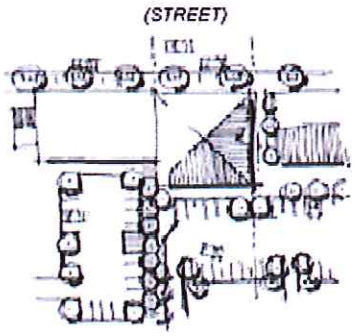
A. Curb cuts are prohibited on Main Street and also on other Pedestrian I Streets, unless access from no other street is available.

2. LOCATION OF PARKING

Intent: reduce the visual impact of parking and enhance the pedestrian experience

A. Parking shall be located under or behind buildings or within structures.

B. On all Pedestrian Streets, surface parking lots are not permitted between the building and the right-of-way.



3. LOCATION OF DRIVE-THROUGH LANES

Intent: preserve a safe and comfortable pedestrian experience

B. Drive-through lanes are not allowed between the building and the public right-of-way on Pedestrian I Streets.

1. LAND USE

Intent: ensure a rich, uninterrupted mixture of lively activities aimed at people on foot

A. Along Pedestrian I Streets, ground floor uses that face the sidewalk shall be retail, restaurant or personal service uses.

B. Along Pedestrian II Streets, ground floor office and residential uses are also acceptable when facing the sidewalk.

2. PROXIMITY TO SIDEWALK

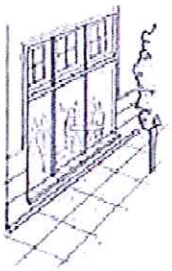
Intent: reinforce an active pedestrian experience along Pedestrian Streets

A. Buildings along Pedestrian Streets shall be set immediately at the back of the sidewalk, with the exception of providing open space for public use such as plazas, courtyards and seating areas.

B. Water run-off from canopies/awnings should be controlled by gutter or other means.

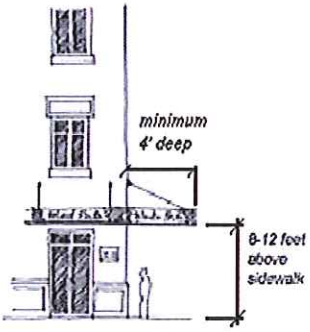
3. GROUND LEVEL TRANSPARENCY

Intent: strongly encourage that structures provide a visual connection with pedestrians between activities inside and outside of buildings



A. Along Pedestrian I Streets, a minimum of 80% of any ground floor façade (between two (2) feet and 12 feet above grade) facing a street or public space shall be comprised of clear, "vision" glass. Placement of office equipment or other similar items shall not be located along the clear vision glass façade that would completely inhibit the visibility into and out of the building space.

B. Along Pedestrian II Streets, a minimum of 60% of any ground floor façade (between two (2) feet and 12 feet above grade) facing a street or public space shall be comprised of clear, "vision" glass. Placement of office equipment or other similar items shall not be located along the clear vision glass façade that would completely inhibit the visibility into and out of the building space.



C. Along Main Street, doors and windows should reflect the historic Main Street rhythm of 25-foot wide storefronts.

D. Frosting, tinting, or other similar glass affects that inhibit the visibility into and out of the building space is prohibited.

4. WEATHER PROTECTION

Intent: provide pedestrians with protection from the weather

A. Canopies and awnings shall be provided along all façades that are adjacent to Pedestrian Streets.

B. The minimum depth of any canopy or awning shall be four (4) feet. The vertical dimension between the underside of the canopy or awning and the sidewalk shall be at least eight (8) feet and no more than 12 feet.

C. Canopies and awnings shall be of shed or marquee style, except that bowed awnings may be used over arched windows.

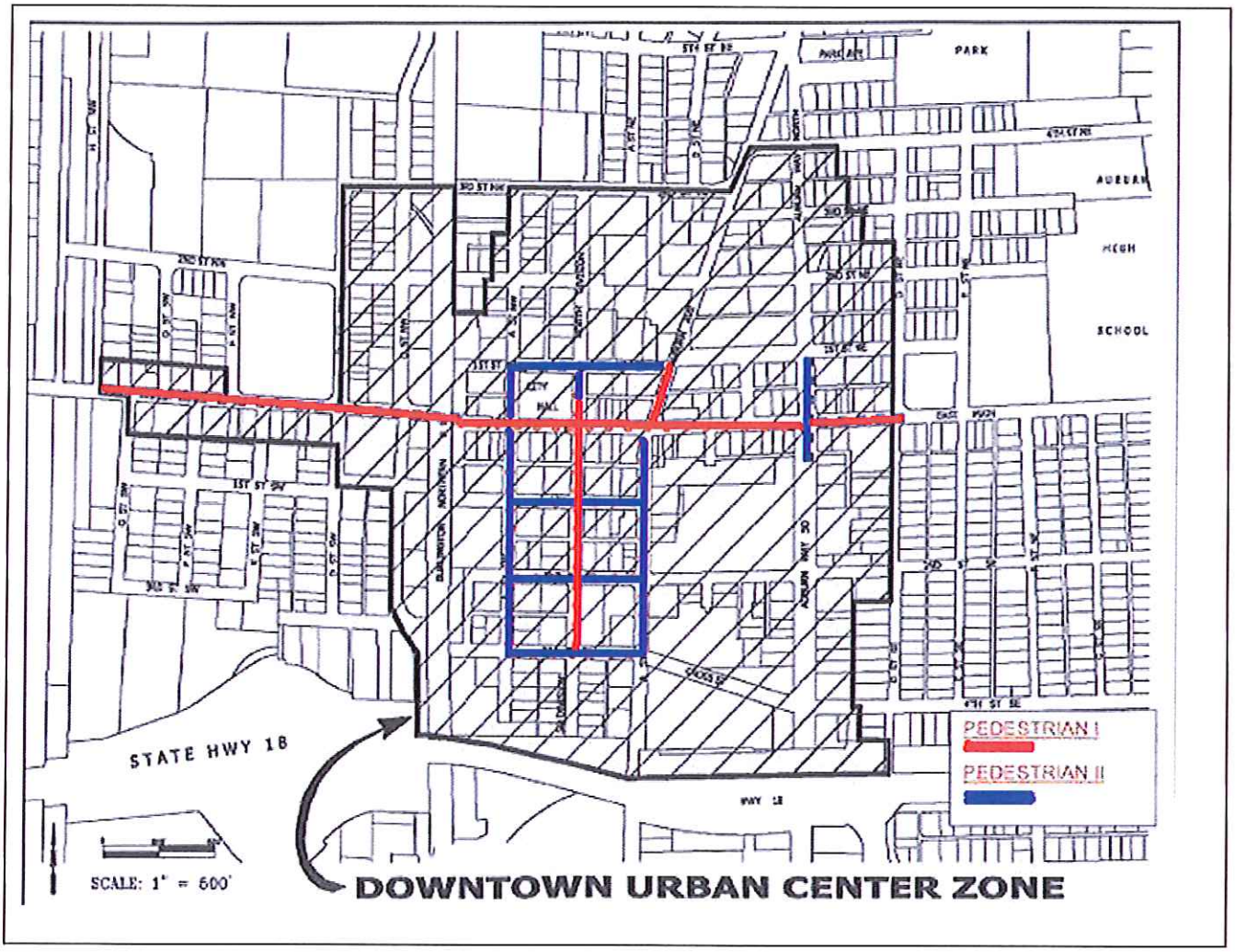
D. Weather protection can be combined with the method used to achieve visual prominence at entrances.

1. PEDESTRIAN ORIENTATION

Intent: provide signs that activate and strengthen the pedestrian realm

A. Signs shall be primarily oriented to pedestrians, rather than people in vehicles. The following are types of signs are encouraged along Pedestrian Streets:
   1) Blade signs (projecting over sidewalk)
   2) Window signs (painted on glass or hung behind glass)
   3) Logo signs (symbols, shapes)
   4) Wall signs over entrance.

B. Monument signs are permitted on pedestrian streets only if the following are met:
   1. The sign is setback from the back of sidewalk;
   2. Does not create a sight distance hazard;
   3. Does not block pedestrian access;
   4. The sign is providing pedestrian wayfinding and not oriented to vehicles; and
   5. Does not conflict with requirements to meet the American with Disabilities Act.

C. Signs shall be evaluated with respect to size, scale, and relationship to other signs, function, location and other factors.

Pedestrian Streets