

# PLAN APPROVAL AUTHORITY'S RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Supplement to the Downtown Smart Growth Overlay District (DSGOD) (Not a Formal Part of Zoning Overlay District)

### PART ONE: GENERAL GUIDELINES

#### 1. INTRODUCTION. These general design guidelines are intended

- \* to preserve and augment the DSGOD's architectural qualities, historic character and pedestrian scale;
- \* to promote historical continuity — the relationship of built structures over time by design that respects the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape;
- \* to ensure that future development in the DSGOD will preserve and enhance existing businesses and residences, serve to catalyze additional investments, and promote a high quality of architecture that has characterized the City's core for over a century;
- \* to create distinctive entrances, windows and facade detailing (such as decorative materials, columns and pilasters and the like) typical to the area;
- \* to allow signage that is in scale and is architecturally compatible with the storefront buildings;
- \* to provide landscaping and pedestrian-oriented open space, including sidewalks and courtyards;
- \* to promote street-level commercial uses;
- \* to design upper story setbacks for institutional and mixed-use buildings to reduce bulk and keep in scale with the neighborhood;
- \* to improve height, bulk and scale compatibility between commercial and residential areas; and
- \* to require screened parking lots and to discourage driveways and curb cuts on commercial streets, particularly along Washington, Granite, Essex, and Emerson Streets.

2. **APPLICABILITY.** The "design guidelines" are intended to set forth nonbinding recommendations that will promote the objectives of the DSGOD's design standards. The general design guidelines are applicable in all subzones.

**3. HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** These design guidelines are intended to preserve and augment the DSGOD's architectural qualities, historic character and pedestrian scale. Contemporary building practices may create visual conflicts with older buildings due to differences in scale, massing and degrees of articulation. The DSGOD emphasizes the notion of historical continuity — the relationship of built structures over time. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction.

A. Building design shall respect the scale, massing and materials of adjacent buildings and landscape.

B. New buildings shall be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to nearby, less-intensive zones. Projects on DSGOD or subzone edges shall be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones or subzones.

C. Building mass shall be broken up by incorporating different façade treatments at intervals to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.

D. New buildings shall be designed to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.

E. New structures shall not exceed 200 feet in length, and shall be broken down into multiple buildings as necessary to avoid monolithic appearance that may obstruct site circulation.

F. Color schemes shall be used to help reduce apparent size and bulk of buildings and provide visual interest.

G. Additional setbacks, modulation and screening shall be used to reduce bulk where there are abrupt changes which increase the relative height above grade along the street or between zones.

**4. STREETScape COMPATIBILITY; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable characteristics of the public streetscape. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. Street trees shall be provided with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.

B. Vehicle entrances to buildings shall not dominate the streetscape.

C. Townhouse structures shall provide pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk.

D. Existing street storefronts shall be designed with horizontal or vertical elements in a line corresponding with the setbacks and façade elements of adjacent building fronts. Such elements may include trees, columns, windows, planters, benches, overhead weather protection, cornices or other building features.

E. Existing street walks shall be emphasized by using paving materials that differentiate the setback area from the sidewalk.

F. For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage shall receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.

**5. HUMAN ACTIVITY; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** A key purpose of the DSGOD is to promote pedestrian friendly activities in the downtown. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. New development shall be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

B. Sidewalk retail opportunities and connections shall be provided by allowing for the opening of the storefront to the street and displaying goods to the pedestrian.

C. Outdoor eating and drinking opportunities shall be provided on the sidewalk by allowing for the opening the restaurant or café windows to the sidewalk and installing outdoor seating while maintaining pedestrian flow.

D. Clear glass windows are preferred along the sidewalk to provide visual access into the retail or dining activities that occur inside. Views into the interior spaces shall not be blocked with the backs of shelving units or with posters.

**6. RESIDENTIAL OPEN SPACE; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. Mature street trees with a high value to the neighborhood shall be preserved where feasible.

B. New residential development or redevelopment shall incorporate open spaces, with special focus on corner landscape treatments and courtyard entries.

C. New buildings shall create courtyard-style open space that is visually accessible to the public view.

D. Upper floors shall be setback to provide solar access to the sidewalk and/or neighboring properties.

E. Sustainable landscape materials, requiring minimal irrigation or fertilizer, shall be used.

F. Porous paving materials to minimize stormwater run-off shall be used.

**7. PARKING AND VEHICLE ACCESS; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** Adequate and convenient parking is important in the DSGOD. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. New building design shall minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

B. Building design shall preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken within a block by vehicular access.

C. Structured parking entrances shall be located on side streets or alleys.

D. Surface parking areas shall not face the main street frontages.

E. Multi-purpose parking areas paved with unit pavers are preferred (i.e., areas that serve both parking and public open space needs).

**8. CORNER LOTS; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. Buildings on corner lots shall be oriented to the corner and public street fronts.

B. Parking and automobile access shall be located away from the corners.

C. Residential entries and special landscaping shall be incorporated into corner lots by setting the structure back from the property lines.

D. Buildings shall provide for a prominent retail corner entry.

**9. ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS AND MATERIALS FOR NEW BUILDINGS; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** New building design shall complement existing character and/or respond to nearby late-19th and early 20th century structures. New buildings shall be sensitive to surrounding noteworthy buildings and style elements.

A. New buildings shall use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended

neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terra cotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color. Masonry is the preferred building material, although other materials may be used in ways that are compatible with these more traditional materials.

B. Base. Ground floors or bases immediately next to pedestrians shall reflect a higher level of detail refinement and high quality materials. Encouraged are transparent, open facades for commercial uses at street level (as an example, windows that cover between 50-80 percent of the ground floor façade area and begin approximately 24 to 30 inches above the sidewalk rather than continuing down to street level).

C. Middle. Mid-level building façade elements shall be articulated to provide visual interest in a bay-by-bay scale. Architectural features may include: belt courses or horizontal bands to distinguish individual floors; change in materials and color and/or texture that enhance specific form elements or vertical elements of the building; a pattern of windows; and/or bay windows to give scale to the structure. Detail elements such as a cast stone, tile or brick pattern that respond to architectural features on existing buildings shall be incorporated. Spacing and width of bays or pavilions shall be used to provide intervals in the façade to create scale elements similar to surrounding buildings.

D. Top. Tops of buildings shall be distinguished from the façade walls by including detail elements consistent with the traditional neighborhood buildings such as steep gables with overhangs, parapets and cornices.

E. Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing shall create a well proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings shall exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building.

1. Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.
2. Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.
3. Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.
4. Materials and design shall be compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.
5. Rooftop building systems (i.e., mechanical and electrical equipment, antennas) shall be screened from all key observation points by integrating them into the building design with parapets, screens or other methods.
6. Distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest shall be illuminated. Pedestrian scale

pole lights shall be used along streets and walks.

F. Human Scale. The design of new buildings shall incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve appropriate human scale.

1. Transom or clerestory windows shall be used above entrances, display windows; projected bay windows are encouraged.
2. Multiple paned windows that divide large areas of glass into smaller parts are preferred.
3. Building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture shall be incorporated into design.
4. Pedestrian-orientation shall be enhanced by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line.

G. Exterior finish materials. Building exteriors shall be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

1. Consider each building as a high-quality, long term addition to the area; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the neighborhood.
2. Provide for operable windows, especially on storefronts.
3. Finish materials that are susceptible to staining, fading or other discoloration are strongly discouraged.
4. The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations. Aluminum and vinyl siding, and siding with narrow trim, is also not favored.

**10. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The DSGOD is intended to provide opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry shall be provided to ensure comfort and security.

B. Sidewalks, paths and entry areas shall be sufficiently lighted and entry areas shall be protected from the weather.

C. Building entrances shall emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.

D. The number of residential entrances on commercial streets where non-residential uses are required shall be minimized. Where residential entries and lobbies on commercial streets are unavoidable, minimize their impact to retail vitality and the commercial streetscape.

E. Entries for residential uses shall be from the street (rather than from the rear of the property) to add to the activity on the street and allow for visual surveillance for personal safety.

F. Open spaces shall be created at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.

G. Continuous, well-lighted, overhead weather protection is strongly encouraged to improve pedestrian comfort and to promote a sense of security.

H. Overhead weather protection should be designed with consideration of the overall architectural concept of the building, including

1. uses occurring within the building (such as entries and retail spaces) or in the adjacent streetscape environment (such as bus stops and intersections);
2. minimizing gaps in coverage, except to accommodate street trees;
3. a drainage strategy that keeps rain water off the street-level façade and sidewalk;
4. relationship to architectural features and elements on adjacent development, especially if abutting a building of historic or noteworthy character;
5. the scale of the space defined by the height and depth of the weather protection; and
6. the illumination of light colored undersides to increase security after dark.

**11. BLANK WALLS; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

A. Buildings shall avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks.

B. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they shall receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest by use of decorative patterns, murals or other treatment.

- C. Long, undifferentiated surfaces, facades or store frontages are strongly discouraged.
- D. Ground floor windows shall be located and designed to maximize transparency of commercial façade and attract pedestrian interest.
- E. Large windows that open to facilitate indoor-outdoor interaction with the street are encouraged.
- F. Windows on walls perpendicular to the street are encouraged.

**12. SCREENING OF DUMPSTERS, UTILITIES AND SERVICE AREAS; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

- A. New developments shall locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front.
- B. Dumpsters shall be consolidated and screened to preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment.

**13. PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

- A. Project design shall promote personal safety and security.

**14. LIGHTING; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

- A. Pedestrian-scale lighting, such as a 12- to 15-foot-high pole or bollard fixtures, shall be used.
- B. Lighting in display windows that illuminates the sidewalk is encouraged.
- C. Architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure is encouraged.
- D. Installation of pedestrian light fixtures as part of a development's sidewalk improvements is required. The style of light fixture should be consistent with the preference identified by the City of Haverhill.

**15. LANDSCAPING; DESIGN GUIDELINES.** The landscape design shall take advantage of special on-site conditions such as river frontage, view corridors, and existing significant trees. The following guidelines are intended to apply to new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

- A. Street trees shall be incorporated in both commercial and residential developments in

addition to trees onsite.

B. A clear distinction shall be made between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials, colors or landscaping.

C. Mature trees shall be saved where feasible.

## **PART TWO: SUBZONE DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**INTRODUCTION.** The DSGOD is divided into five residential subzones for the purpose of tailoring densities and design standards that are appropriate to each subzone. The following design guidelines shall apply within Subzones D and E. Where the subzone guidelines set forth below are more specific than those set forth in Part One: General Design Guidelines, the subzone guidelines shall control.

### ***Multifamily 20 - Subzone D:***

A. Proximate to Washington Street; Design Guidelines.

1. Projects shall build a high-quality physical connection to the City's planned Riverwalk.
2. In exchange for an easement for the public's right to pass from Washington Street to the City's planned Riverwalk, a proposed project may request an increase in height and density from standard dimensional regulations contained herein. No building shall exceed a maximum height of 8 stories under any circumstances. The PAA will weigh the value of the proposed public benefit against any potential impacts when deciding whether to grant such a request.
3. Rooftop gardens are encouraged.

B. Historic District; Design Guidelines.

1. Artist Live/Work Units are strongly encouraged.

### ***Townhouse 12 - Subzone E:***

1. Mixed use is encouraged along Winter Street frontage.