

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
FROM: Steve Westbay
DATE: October 6, 2015
RE: Commercial Design Standards

On August 18th the Council was provided a general overview of design standard elements established in the *City of Gunnison Land Development Code (LDC)*. The 2014 *LDC* establishes contemporary standards for site plan development that promote quality urban design. Existing standards include, but are not limited to, detailed access and parking lot design standards, buffering standards, landscaping standards, signage and lighting.

The 2014 *LDC* also contains specific standards for large scale retail (Big Box- more than 50,000 square feet) that include architectural design provisions. Other than dimensional standards affecting building design, the *LDC* does not establish any other controls for architectural design.

At the August 18th council meeting the staff was asked to provide a tabulated summary of commercial design standards enacted by other municipal jurisdictions. Since the 2014 *LDC* already addresses many development factors associated with commercial development, the staff review has focused on standards associated with commercial architectural design.

Architectural design standards can address a variety of design related topics, but most contemporary standards focus on building mass form and scale, building façade material types, integration of window and doors into the wall plane design (solid: void ratio) and regulation of other related building design elements. For the purpose of this assessment, several architectural design elements were integrated in the attached table, but please note this is a summary of only some of the potential themes that may be applied to commercial design standards. Design standards from other jurisdictions reviewed for this presentation have varying levels of detail, with some standards being very broad statements that may be too vague for consistent application and others being very detailed in content.

The following is a summary of factors that should be considered if the Council desires to move forward with the adoption of commercial design standards:

1. Crafting the city's approach on design standards should be based on solid research and legal advice, properly weighing the standards to permissible legal purpose.
2. Architectural design standards should be based on the perceived community character. Understanding and identifying related themes should be established through citizen involvement processes, visual surveys and other techniques that help to define the local design character. Development of architectural design standards will require consulting services by professionals versed in urban and architectural design.
3. Design standards may be perceived in an adverse manner without extensive education and cultivation of citizen support.
4. Applying architectural design standards must be vetted through established procedures that ensure due process challenges are not an issue - are the regulations reasonable and applied to all related development in a set zone district or overlay zone? Are terms properly defined? Is the authorized governing board properly trained and impartial?

Jurisdiction	Building Orientation	Architectural Style	Roof lines	Massing	Building Materials	Colors	Window Treatments	Landscaping	Pedestrian Access	Screening	Other Comments
Durango River Corridor	Viewshed protection – 2 perspectives drawings from river			35' maximum height in river overlay				Buffer river viewshed impacts & maintain riparian habitat	Minimum 15' setback from river trail. Pedestrian loading area required		2 overlay districts River district and CBD district
Durango Downtown		Meet the intent of the adopted design guideline & Historic Preservation standards									
Estes Park – Stanley Hotel. Overlay District	Viewshed protection	Height 30' maximum	4:12 Pitch								
Ft Collins Development Standards – site & design standards	Build-to lines at street sidewalk. -pedestrian oriented street fronts. Building no more than 15' from ROW.	Building wall plane modules are a max 30' wide. Massing changes are accomplished using varied wall textures, window voids or other design elements creating variation.	Base (1 st floor) and top (above 1 st floor) treatments are required to distinguish vert. design element – stepped parapets, cornice treatments, slope roof articulations.	Variation in Mass: Height/Width mass no more than 1:3 w/o mass variation.	Material combinations may be used to distinguish bldg. façade modules and massing.	Integrally textured materials such as stone and masonry. Integrally colored and patterned materials; lighter or darker colored material, mullions or panels.	Windows, entrances, awnings, et al. cover no less than 50% of wall plane facade	Landscape standards are addressed in the Ft. Collins Development Code.	Addressed in Development Code Access standards	Addressed in Development Code screening standards	Site development and design standards are contained in a uniform code format. Ft. Collins standards are integrated and detailed in scope.
Glenwood Springs- DT Design Standard	New structures shall respond to the contextual building setbacks and orientation of the surrounding structures on the block. New construction shall be built parallel to lot lines to reflect the historical orientation of nonresidential structures	Prominent, street-oriented doorways, awnings and large glass storefront windows features that add visual interest and contributing to both the architectural and the pedestrian-oriented character of the Downtown Core. Maintain the distinction between the street level and the upper floors.	The primary roof form shall appear to be flat, as traditionally found on the City's downtown commercial structures. A parapet shall conceal roofs. "Exotic" roof forms, including mansards, shall not be allowed.	Building massing shall respect the existing neighborhood scale, especially along the lot edge that abuts existing residential development and along the street edge. A wider structure shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be divided into modules that reflect these traditional building widths.	Commercial structures are constructed of sturdy, earth-toned materials such as brick and stone. Natural materials contribute to the character and perceived permanence of a structure.	Use Earth tone colors with natural materials. Deep red, blue and green may be used as accent colors to add visual interest to a store front façade or entrance.	Upper story windows shall have a vertical emphasis, and similar proportions to those traditionally found on historic commercial structures Transparent, clear glass shall be used. Opaque, tinted and mirrored glass shall not be used.	Landscape standards are addressed in the Glenwood Springs Development Code.	Street Design standards address pedestrian function and Streetscape design	Ground-mounted electrical and mechanical equipment shall be screened from public view using opaque fencing, walls or a combination of fencing or walls and plantings	Glenwood Springs codes are integrated and detailed in scope.
Mt. CB	Vistas and view-sheds are to be preserved. Setbacks based on individual zone district standards				Roof materials must be harmonious to natural environment - natural materials used	Earth tone colors are favored – bright colors used only as accents. Non-reflective metals may be used.		Use a point schedule for the site landscape requirements.			Cut:fill and retainage standards are established along with retaining wall standards.
Steamboat Springs – Commercial Standards		Deep eaves, projections, and use of awnings and window placements are integrated into the building design	Pitched roof preferred-but protect against ice and snow fall. Roof style shall balance compatibility with area character.	Avoid Blank Walls	Quality material – but not defined. Building design cannot include a corporate architecture image-no golden arches			Landscape standards are addressed in the Steamboat Springs Development Code.	Shall provide for ease of pedestrian access.	Mechanical Equipment and Service Area	
Steamboat Springs- Downtown standards	Parallel to lot lines with building front orientated to street	Similar to existing buildings. Contemporary design is encourage but complements traditional structures.	Similar to existing buildings. Third story modules are required to have 15' setback from sidewalk.	Divide large mass structure into modules. Change massing form if walls are +25' wide.	Use traditional materials: brick, stone, painted wood, stucco. Panel products are prohibited	Awning allowed but cannot be exotic or high gloss material.	Use product similar to existing buildings. Solid:Void ratio required but no specific ratio is identified. Upper story window have vertical emphasis		Develop active outdoor space for pedestrians.		
Woodland Park	Building orientation should face the street frontage and preserve view corridors.	Blank walls visible to the public shall be avoided, to the extent possible.	Scale of the existing and proposed buildings to create an existing rhythm of buildings along the street.	Building shall be set to fit the existing topography. Buildings should be set lower than any ridgeline on the site.	Brick, sandstone wood, stucco, colored and textured concrete masonry units of facing material are encouraged. NOTE: This is not a standard but only a guideline.	Colors which blend with adjoining building style and natural surrounding environment shall be use on buildings. Panelized plywood and highly reflective material for facing material is prohibited.		Healthy existing trees shall be preserved to the extent feasible. Acceptable standards for tree spacing pruning and maintenance must be met.	Sidewalks Required in commercial and multi-family development. Dimensional standards are set by the city engineer. Private on-site walkways are a minimum of 5' wide.		Outdoor display of retail goods shall be limited to the private property area at the front of the principal building and shall not extend beyond 25' of any front wall. Outside storage shall be screened by fencing or suitable buffering