

PART I



THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overall introduction to the *Design Excellence Manual*, as well as an overview of the structure of the document.

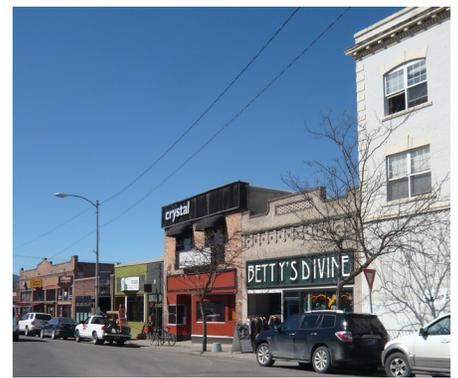
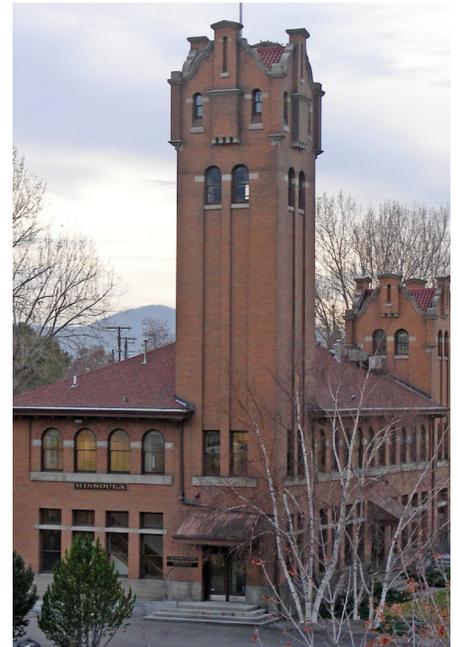
Background

Missoula: a place like no other. Nestled in the Missoula Valley, framed by mountain ranges and nourished by three rivers, the City enjoys a unique setting with a distinctive sense of place. Its eclectic character and quality of life are valued by all.

Much of the built environment also is distinctly Missoula. Many buildings speak of the City's roots and its role as an early commercial center. These reflect use of regional materials and practical ways of building. Residents describe the built environment of Missoula as eclectic and low-key. And they note it is a collection of neighborhoods, each with its own special identity. These are aspects that the community values and seeks to retain. While much of Missoula exhibits these features, some buildings have appeared over the years that are less distinctive and bear less resemblance to the character of Missoula. These design guidelines are intended to promote design that is compatible with the City's design traditions.

In the 1860s, early settlers saw opportunity here and founded the City. Growth was spurred by many sources, but it was especially driven by a lumber industry that supplied timber for railroads, dams and buildings throughout the region. Then, in 1893, the City was designated to be the home of the University of Montana and subsequently, the U.S. Forest Service established a regional office here. These institutions further sparked development and led to construction of many buildings that survive today as some of the City's most important historic resources, especially in the Downtown.

Growth and change have continued since those early days, building a city with a lively core. Other commercial areas have evolved along corridors, many radiating from Downtown and others providing major circulation routes following ordinal grid lines or aligning along rivers and other natural features.





In these places, early buildings were constructed of local materials, and exhibited the skilled craftsmanship of the City's residents. While many designs reflected regional trends, local craftsmen stamped signatures on them, making them distinctly of Missoula. The result is eclectic, yet of the place. Many recent buildings have set new standards for design and innovation, while fitting with the community.



However, as with many other cities across the country, some development has been out of character. Some development exhibits "cookie cutter" design that does not respond to Missoula's character. Other development doesn't achieve the best use of land or contribute to their neighborhoods. Other development turns inward, leaving edges that are less inviting to pedestrians or that negatively impacts abutting neighborhoods.



Design quality has impacts on the vitality of Downtown and the commercial Corridors, and it also can impede the City's ambitions in achieving other goals of reducing automobile dependence, increasing housing supply and limiting sprawl. Throughout Missoula, improving the pedestrian experience along the street is a key objective. An attractive, safe and inviting pedestrian experience encourages people to walk more often. When people walk more often it benefits public health, reduces traffic congestion and helps the local economy.

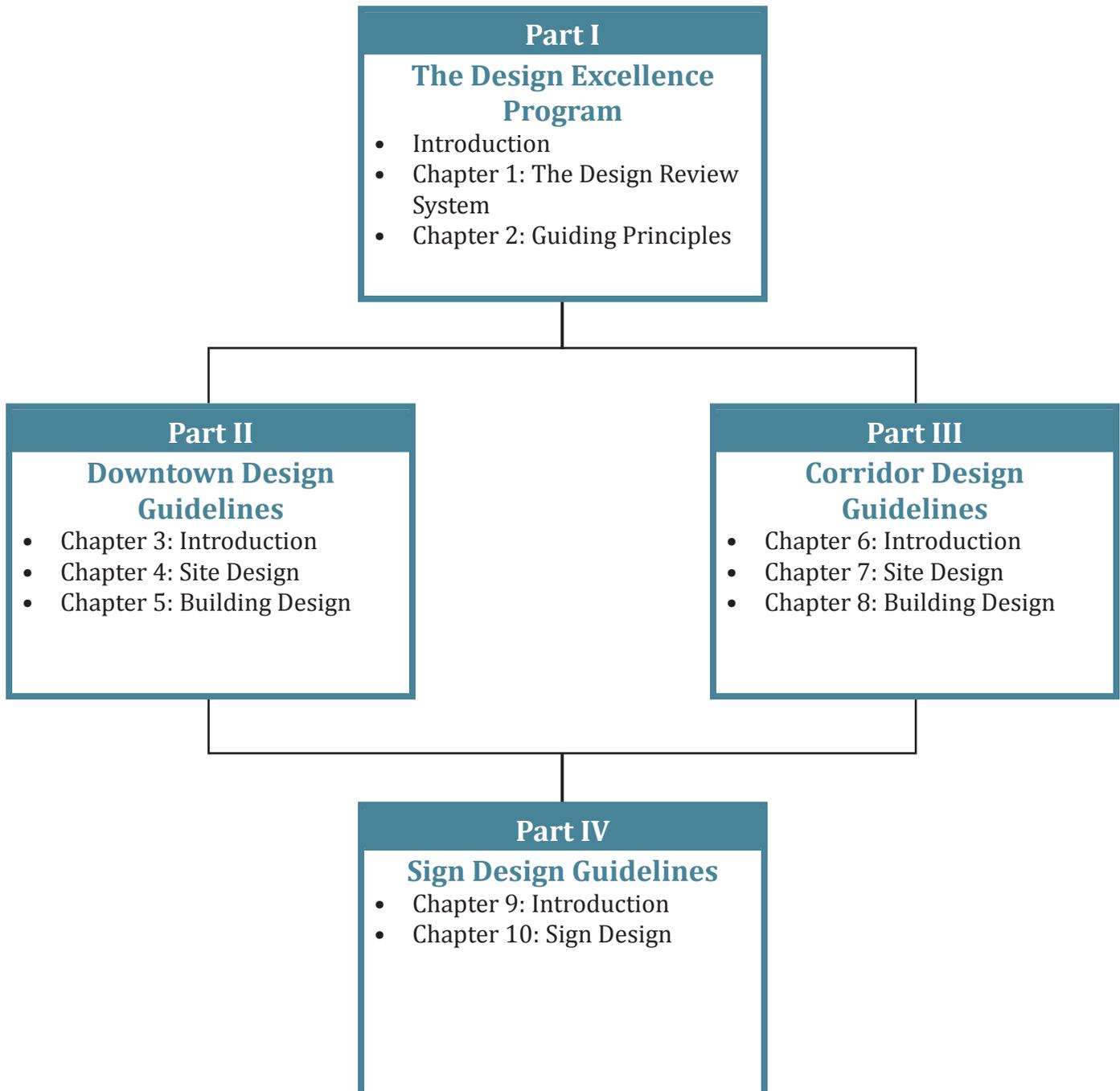
Many community leaders and concerned citizens have raised questions about how to achieve high quality design in the built environment, while encouraging innovation in design and construction and stimulating economic development. The challenge is to accommodate compatible development that draws from the traditions of the community while promoting design excellence and creative new solutions. These design guidelines are provided to ensure that new development and improvements to existing properties occur in ways that meet the needs of individual property owners while also enhancing the existing character that defines Missoula.

The design guidelines address a wide range of settings and different areas throughout the City. They recognize that the appropriateness of improvements is dependent on the setting.

Property owners and designers will use these guidelines when planning improvements, and City staff, boards and commissions will use them in development review. The guidelines also serve an educational purpose to help residents understand the community's expectations for high quality design.

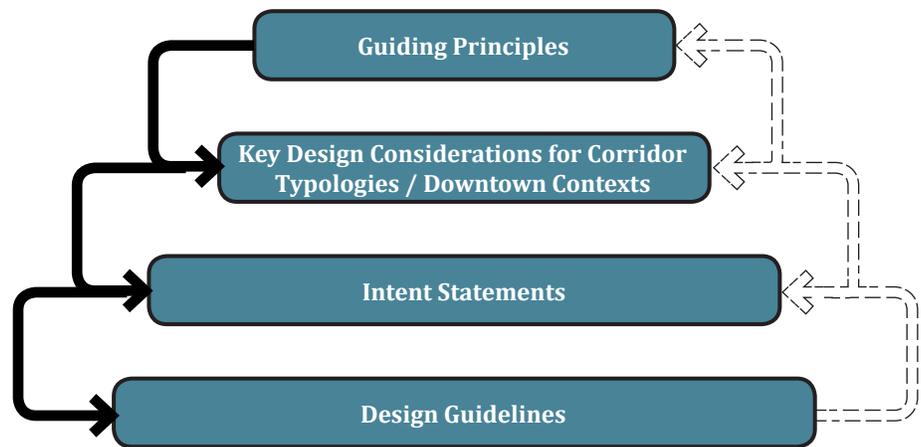
Organization of this Design Excellence Manual

This *Design Excellence Manual* is organized into four parts, each subdivided into Chapters. Part I offers an introduction to the Manual, background information about the project and an explanation of the design review system. It also provides context and background for the other Chapters, and includes information for both Downtown and the Corridors. Part II contains design guidelines for projects in Downtown, and is subdivided into an introductory chapter, a site design chapter and a building design chapter. Part III contains design guidelines for projects in the Corridor Overlays, and is subdivided similarly to Part II into an introduction, and site and building design. Finally, Part IV contains design guidelines for signs. Part IV applies to projects in Downtown as well as in the Corridor Overlays.



Linking the Design Concepts in the Manual

This document presents a series of design concepts in a hierarchical structure with four levels. At the highest level, Guiding Principles describe the long term goals and vision for design excellence in Missoula. These Guiding Principles help inform the more specific Key Design Considerations for the Corridor Typologies and the Downtown Contexts. These Key Design Considerations are described in Chapter 3 of Part II and Chapter 6 of Part III. The *Design Excellence Manual* organizes guidelines into specific topics, each of which begins with an intent statement that outlines the desired objective for the associated guidelines. Finally, the Design Guidelines themselves provide more detailed directives for satisfying the intent statement. Each element informs the next, and one may move back up the hierarchy to gain broader perspective.



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CHAPTER 1. THE DESIGN REVIEW SYSTEM

This chapter explains the potential design review system under which this *Design Excellence Manual* will be used. The basic structure and applicability of the Design Guidelines is also introduced.

General Applicability of the Design Guidelines

For more information regarding the applicability of the guidelines in this *Design Excellence Manual* and their relationship to the *Overlay Design Standards* as well as other standards in *Title 20* (zoning), please see the **Draft Missoula Design Excellence Tools Executive Summary and Reader's Guide**.

Flexibility in the Design Guidelines

The design guidelines are intended to allow for flexibility in how a project meets them. The design guidelines are qualitative and focus on broader design objectives. As such, discretion and interpretation are required to determine when a project is consistent with the guidelines. The guidelines in this document include intent statements under each topic. These statements describe the desired design objective. More specific guidelines follow each intent statement. Flexibility in interpretation of the guidelines is available when an alternative design solution meets the intent of a guideline.

Relationship to Other Policy and Regulatory Documents

Missoula possesses planning policy and regulatory documents that provide general guidance for development in the City, as well as more specific planning ideas for particular parts of the City.

Citywide Planning Policy

Citywide planning policy comes from two main sources, the City Growth Policy and *Title 20* (zoning).

City Growth Policy 2035 (2015)

This document provides an overarching plan and vision for managing growth and development over the next 20 years. It addresses land use, housing, economic conditions, local services, community character, culture and history. The foundation for the City Growth Policy is the overarching strategy of "Focus Inward"; this principle encourages preservation of neighborhoods and community assets while making more efficient use of underutilized or undeveloped spaces.

Title 20 (zoning)

Title 20 contains various code sections that regulate land use and development in Missoula. These sections establish base zone districts and regulate landscaping, parking and design. The purpose of *Title 20* is to promote public health, safety and general welfare, as well as implement the policies and goals in the Growth Policy and in other adopted plans.

Downtown Planning Policy

Many area plans provide a policy base for these design guidelines. Providing an active street edge, clearly defining a street wall, respecting residential areas and preserving historic resources are among the policies that appear frequently in these documents.

Front Street Urban Renewal District Plan (2007)

This plan outlines goals and strategies for revitalization in the Front Street Urban Renewal District. It identifies a broad vision for the District as well as specific urban design recommendations.

Greater Downtown Master Plan (2009)

The Missoula Greater Downtown Plan is a comprehensive strategy for strengthening and expanding Downtown Missoula's role as the economic and cultural heart of the community. Many of its goals focus on maintaining Downtown character while accommodating new compatible development and growth. The plan delivers recommendations regarding regulation and zoning changes to achieve a vision that is consistent with the system described in this Introduction.

Hellgate Urban Renewal Plan (2014)

This Urban Renewal Plan defines the goals for redevelopment and revitalization in the Hellgate Urban Renewal District. It offers a vision in which the district becomes an employment anchor that will attract businesses and complement Downtown and the University.

Corridor Planning Policy

Some parts of the Corridors appear in specific plans for special areas.

Russell Street Development Recommendations (2014)

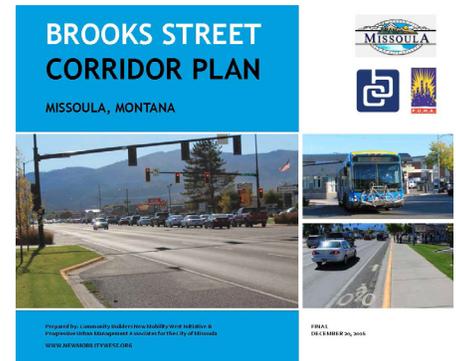
This document outlines recommendations for MRA policy and City regulations for Russell Street. The document recommends zoning changes and design standards that are tailored to this setting.

Brooks Street Corridor Plan (2016)

This document recommends tools that can help the market capitalize on future transit enhancements along Brooks Street. It includes potential regulatory tools and policies to improve development. These are reflected in the standards and design guidelines for the Corridors.

North Reserve Scott Street Master Plan (2016)

This plan provides a long-term vision for the future of the North Reserve Scott Street Urban Renewal District, to help guide public and private investment. It includes a vision for development that is expressed in the standards and guidelines in his manual.



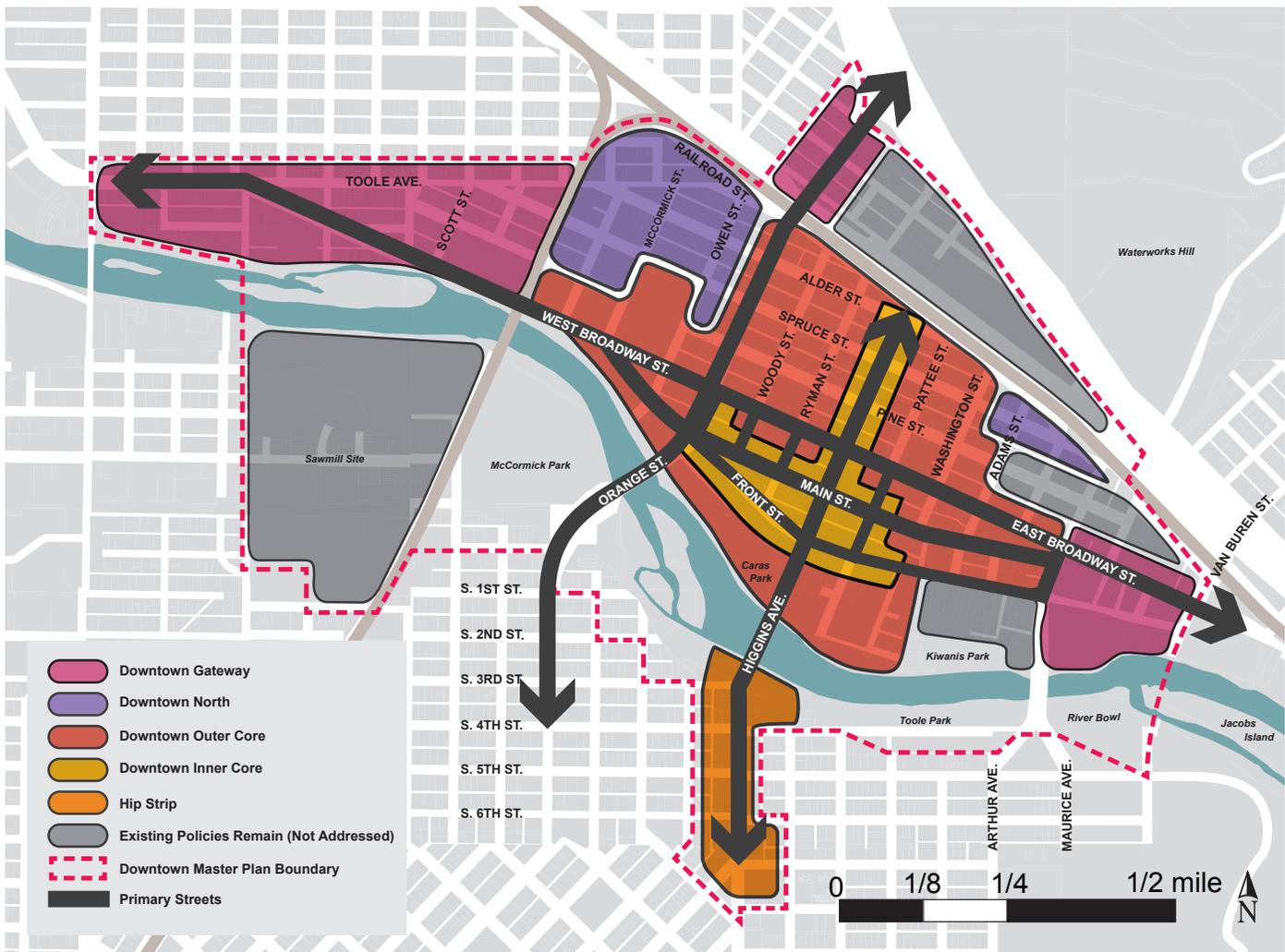
The Overlays

The *Design Excellence Tools* are an “overlay” to the City’s existing *Title 20* zoning requirements. The overlays are a regulatory mechanism that applies additional rules to designated areas of the City that can be mapped. The *Design Excellence Tools* include overlays for the Downtown and the Corridors.

The Downtown Design Contexts

The design guidelines for Downtown apply to the area identified on Figure 1. Within that boundary, five Design Contexts are defined. Many of the guidelines apply equally throughout the Downtown, but the degree to which certain guidelines are important varies, depending upon the Context and the design objectives. These Contexts are further explained in Chapter 3 of Part II.

Figure 1. Downtown Contexts Map



The Corridor Typologies

The design guidelines for the Corridors generally apply to the non-residentially zoned properties adjacent to the street segments identified in Figure 2. Four different categories, or Typologies, are identified. Additionally, Nodes are identified to indicate key intersections or gateways. Many of the guidelines apply equally throughout each of the Corridors Typologies, but the degree to which certain guidelines are important varies, depending on the Typology and whether the area is designated as a Node. Each has specific design objectives that should be considered when applying the design guidelines. The Typologies are further explained in Chapter 6 of Part III.

Figure 2. Corridor Typologies Map



Applying the Design Guidelines

Design review is recommended to be applied in different ways along the Corridors, and it is required for Downtown. In some areas, design review is required for all projects, whereas in others, design review would be required only for projects that reach a defined threshold in terms of size or location. In other cases, design review would be required when assistance through incentives are sought, such as when the Urban Renewal Agency participates. In addition, projects seeking alternative ways to comply with standards in the code would go through design review. Different ways in which the guidelines apply is illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1. APPLICATION OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES						
Application	Description	Downtown	Corridor Typology 1	Corridor Typology 2	Corridor Typology 3	Corridor Typology 4
Design Review Required	Design review & compliance with design guidelines required	Yes	Yes			
Design Review by Threshold	Design review & compliance with design guidelines required above set threshold			Yes in nodes and for projects 8,000SF or more ^[1]	Yes in nodes and for projects 15,000SF or more ^[1]	Yes in nodes and for projects 30,000SF or more ^[1]
Incentive Based & Conditional Use Design Review	Design review & compliance with design guidelines required to receive incentives	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alternative Compliance	Design review with design guidelines optional for alternative compliance to zoning standard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Advisory	Design review required, but compliance with design guidelines is voluntary					
Voluntary	No review required; design guidelines are informational only			For projects less than 8,000SF	For projects less than 15,000SF	For projects less than 30,000SF

^[1]Design review is required for all projects in a designated node and anywhere in the overlay when a project exceeds the threshold indicated.

Design Guidelines Format

The guidelines in this document follow a consistent format with the following components.

Design Topic Heading

The design topic heading indicates the beginning of a section that discusses one particular topic.

Intent Statement

The second component presents a policy statement, which explains the desired outcome for the treatment of the specific design element. This typically includes the term “should” and provides a broad basis for the more detailed design guidelines that immediately follow. In some cases, if the guidelines do not specifically address a particular design issue, then the City can use this policy statement to determine appropriateness.

Design Guideline

The third component is the design guideline statement itself, which is typically performance-oriented, describing a desired design outcome. This is numbered to facilitate reference during design review discussions and formal documentation of findings.

Additional Information

The design guideline statement is followed by supplementary information that is treated as sub-points of the guideline. These are shown in bulleted lists, and may include examples of how, or how not to, comply with the guideline.

Illustration

A design guideline is further explained with photographs and illustrations. These convey more detail about appropriate design solutions. Generally, photographs and illustrations are used as “good” examples of the particular design idea, or are simply provided as a definitional example.

Sidebar

Sidebars are provided when there are additional contextual considerations that influence the way a design guideline is applied in different situations. Sidebars also provide references to relevant sections of the Overlay Standards.

An example page from Part II Chapter 3 is provided on the next page to illustrate the guidelines format.

Example Design Guideline Format

A	Design Topic Heading	D	Additional Information
B	Intent Statement	E	Illustration
C	Design Guideline	F	Sidebar

E

F

Building Orientation

Building orientation refers to how a structure connects to the public realm visually and physically. The way in which it faces the street, where an entry is located in relation to public space and how it connects to public space are factors to consider. A building should establish a visual and physical relationship with the public realm (this may include the street, sidewalk and public spaces, parks and plazas). Doing so provides visual interest, creates an inviting presence and generates pedestrian activity.

SD3. Orient a building to the public realm.

- Orient a building's primary functional entry to face a street. Orienting a primary entrance to a public plaza or other prominent public space is also an appropriate alternative.
- A double-fronted building should have an entry facing the street and also an entry facing an interior parking area.
- If a building fronts a prominent public space, orient to this as well.
- If a property is located along the Clark Fork River, orient an entry toward this natural feature. Consider providing an outdoor space, such as a balcony, patio, or rooftop terrace that allows views to the River.

Contextual Considerations

More options for orienting a building to the street are appropriate outside of the Core areas of Downtown.

Downtown Overlay Standards

Building orientation is subject to the design standards in the Downtown Overlay Standards.



Entry establishes connection to the sidewalk and street.



Entry establishes connection to a public plaza.



A building should be located relatively close to the front property line such that it frames the public realm, enhances it, provides visual interest at the street level and is compatible with the traditional Downtown development pattern.

A

B

C

D

CHAPTER 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES



The following key principles for design excellence apply to all areas in the design overlays. These are based on recurring themes from community and stakeholder input.

Design for Missoula

Missoula is a unique city with a strong sense of place. The City's special identity is part of what people love about it and that's what attracts people. A key part of this sense of place is the built environment. Each project in Downtown and the commercial Corridors should contribute to Missoula's strong sense of place by connecting, supporting and protecting its distinctive qualities. These include its natural resources, a vibrant, diverse community, distinct neighborhoods and the Downtown.

Encourage Architectural Diversity

Architectural diversity is an important part of design in Missoula. This reflects decades of development and creativity. The design guidelines support this unique character, and reflect best practices in urban design.





Connect to Nature

Missoula is a place profoundly enriched by its connection to nature. Development should maintain and enhance this connection by incorporating natural materials for buildings, native plants for landscaping, and through use of green space, urban forest areas and restoration of riparian areas and community gardens. Connecting to nature also means being sensitive to, and maintaining views from, the public realm to the surrounding mountains and other landmarks.



Respect Traditions and Historic Resources

Traditional development in Downtown and along the Corridors is a cherished component of the City's character. It is important that new buildings draw from these design traditions in terms of building materials, scale and craftsmanship, while encouraging creativity and innovation. A key goal of the City Growth Policy is to encourage projects that inspire residents and visitors to explore and learn about Missoula's unique character and its history. The intent is not to replicate history, but draw inspiration from it to promote a cohesive character.



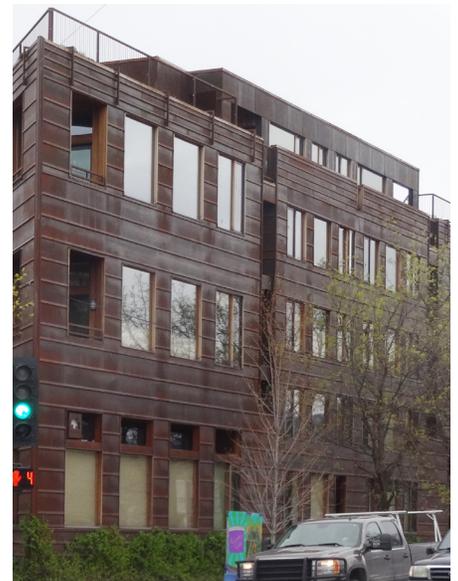
Engage the Public Realm

Development in Missoula must respect and engage the public realm to foster pedestrian activity and enhance the aesthetics of the Corridors and Downtown. The City Growth Policy urges projects to consider ways to address how development looks and interacts with the street system, while accommodating higher density housing on Corridors and promoting urban design that de-emphasizes the automobile and instead emphasizes pedestrian scale development.



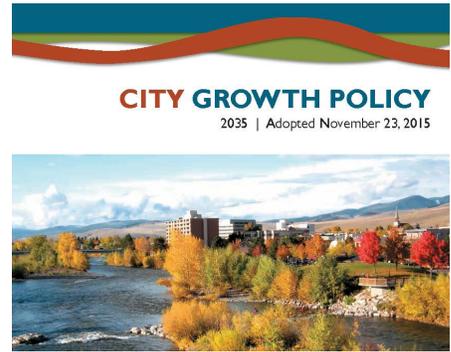
Support Economic Benefits & Value Added

Good urban design and placemaking provide tangible economic, social and environmental benefits. Potential benefits include higher property values, improved pedestrian safety and reduced property crime. Furthermore, greater mobility and more efficient use of existing public infrastructure can be achieved. Maintaining high quality design that contributes to community character can help improve quality of life and create an environment where people want to live, work and invest. The design guidelines encourage high quality design that adds value to new development and also promotes the reuse of the existing building stock.



Implement the City Growth Policy

The City Growth Policy serves as a road map for development in Missoula. The plan provides a snapshot of existing conditions in Missoula and establishes goals, objectives and actions for the City to strive for, in order to achieve the community’s vision for the future. The Growth Policy specifically calls for creating design standards that enhance Missoula’s unique characteristics and promotes beautification.



Focus Inward

An overarching theme in the City’s Growth Policy is to “focus inward.” The design guidelines promote compact, infill development that is concentrated in the urban core where infrastructure and services already exist, in order to support connectivity, livability and sustainability. This discourages expansion into open space, agricultural resources and natural areas.



Implement Area Plans

In addition to the City Growth Policy, Missoula has created visions for the Downtown and several Corridor segments. Each plan represents the hard work, hopes and desires of the community. New development should build on these valuable policy documents.