



## **City of Lakewood**

### **Commercial District Design Guidelines**

#### **Architectural Board of Review**

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Created through a partnership with  
The City of Lakewood's  
Architectural Board of Review  
Department of Planning and Development  
and  
Lakewood Alive's Downtown Design Committee

## **Introduction**

The Commercial District Design Guidelines embody community values and offer direction to new development, rehabilitation, redevelopment and other improvements in Lakewood's commercial districts. The target audience is developers, designers, property owners, business owners, visitors and residents.

At the core of these guidelines are three fundamental goals that serve as the basis for the design principles. These goals are the vision and articulation of the characteristics that make for a vibrant downtown and commercial districts. The design principles are categories to describe the physical elements and manifestations of that vision.

### **The Prime Directive – Fundamental Goals for Design and Development**

#### **Create Places for People**

Vibrant cities promote and develop places that always put people first. Lakewood's places must be safe, comfortable, varied, attractive and fun.

#### **Enhance Existing Assets**

Vibrant cities require that development respond to and engage with its setting. Lakewood's existing qualities--its density, walkability, and historic streetcar-era building stock – should be enriched and preserved whenever possible.

#### **Create Connections**

Vibrant cities make it easy for people to navigate and connect to, from and within them. Lakewood's connections will link its' attributes, amenities and public spaces physically, psychologically and visually.

### **The Commercial Design Principles**

The following five principles elaborate on the concepts, means and methods of development that will positively impact the physical realm of Lakewood's commercial districts.

**\_ Think Pedestrian First**

**\_ Place Activity at the Street**

**\_ Minimize the Impact of Parking and Vehicles**

**\_ Compatibility with the Historic Context**

**\_ Quality of Design**

## I. Think Pedestrian First

**Lakewood's commercial districts shall be designed and developed to provide for a safe and inviting pedestrian experience.**

A comfortable, safe and attractive pedestrian experience is the key to the success of Lakewood's commercial districts. Buildings should be designed to promote walkability or rehabilitated to recapture the qualities of existing buildings and their original pedestrian orientation. The principle of Pedestrian First requires business entrances to engage the street and provide a clear entry sequence. Sidewalk areas should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian activity while also allowing space for amenities such as landscaping, benches, transit waiting areas, and refuse containers.

### **Fundamental Concepts**

Building Entrance on the Street  
Active Uses: Dining, Retail, Business  
Consistent Setbacks to sidewalk  
Human scale design

### **Design Elements**

- Windows at street level
- Encourage planters
- Appropriate scale signage (blade & pendant)
- No blank walls or blank windows
- Promote window displays
- Provide 4-season activity
- Inviting entrances
- No head-in parking
- Limit curb cuts & vehicle access
- Parking in the rear
- Scale of buildings in context with adjacent buildings
- Lighted building facades
- Consistent Setbacks to Sidewalks
- Promote outdoor dining
- Promote mixed-use
  - No residential at street level (doors only for access to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and up)
  - Residential OK at transitions/connections to residential on side streets
- Prioritize Uses: Dining, Retail, Business
- Provide for day and evening activity
- Promote business and retail uses
- Provide public market place

## II. Place Activity at the Street

### **Lakewood's commercial districts shall have buildings that place active uses on the first floor and program elements at the street level.**

The ground floor of buildings shall promote transparency by addressing the sidewalk and engaging both users of the building and casual pedestrians. Retail, dining, and active business uses with both day and evening programming are strongly encouraged at the ground floor. Building entrances, storefronts, and windows shall interact with the street with appropriate scale signage and window displays for pedestrians. Amenities in the public right-of-way are encouraged including public seating, outdoor dining, public art, planters, and seasonal decorations. Blank walls and obscured or blocked windows, as well as curb cuts, and parking lots on main streets are strongly discouraged.

#### **Fundamental Concepts**

Building entrance on the street

Street Wall - Infill gaps in street wall with compatible new construction.

Windows at street level (transparency/permeability)

Appropriate scale signage (blade & pendant)

No blank walls or obscured or blank windows

Provide benches or public seating

#### **Design Elements**

Promote mixed-use

Residential at 2<sup>nd</sup> floors and up

No street level dwelling units on main streets

Residential doors only at street level

Residential OK at transitions/connections to residential on side streets

Provide for day and evening activity

Promote business and retail uses

Parking garages behind primary structures

Public Wi-Fi

Promote window displays

Encourage public art

Provide for 4-season activity

Bike racks

Inviting Entrances

Re-design bus shelters

Provide public marketplace

Consistent setbacks to sidewalk

No angled parking

Limit curb-cuts & vehicle access

Parking in the rear

Maintain appropriate sidewalk width to building height ratio

Scale of buildings in context with adjacent buildings

Infill gaps in street wall

Unique architectural detailing

Lighted building facades

### **III. Minimize the Impact of Parking and Vehicles**

**Lakewood's commercial districts shall locate parking to the rear of the building and eliminate curb cuts along main avenues.**

Parking areas and entrances to parking areas should be at the rear of commercial buildings and accessed from secondary streets. Curb cuts within blocks should be eliminated to mitigate the impact to primary pedestrian routes and to promote an uninterrupted public realm on the sidewalk and other pedestrian routes.

#### **Fundamental Concepts**

Parking in Rear

Minimize/eliminate mid-block curb cuts

No visible parking areas from the street

#### **Design Elements**

Access to parking from side streets

Pedestrian access through rear parking area

Parking areas landscaped and defined with appropriate scale fencing

Pedestrian scale lighting

Minimize heat-island effect with landscaped islands

Promote public parking areas with signage

Enhance crosswalks

Trees/landscaping

Bike racks

Wayfinding in parking lots to commercial district

Design for rear entrances from parking

Utilize environmentally friendly design including permeable pavements and bio-swales

#### **IV. Compatibility with the Historic Context**

**Lakewood's commercial districts shall have a physical character that relates well to the adjacent buildings both along the corridor and in transition to residential neighborhoods.**

Respect the buildings and streetscape as a whole - the mass and scale, the architectural elements and details, the rhythm of those elements, and the building materials should guide project development. Buildings should be designed to respect adjacent existing buildings and streetscape fabric. Lakewood has an active commercial district with immediate adjacency to dense residential areas. Connections from and transitions into the residential district from the commercial core must be respected.

##### **Fundamental Concepts**

Appropriate mass and scale to commercial surroundings  
Design that enhances or highlights contributing architecture  
Retain and preserve the historic building stock  
Locate buildings to the street wall  
Respect connections & transitions adjacent to residential areas  
Buffer to residential with appropriate design elements

##### **Design Elements**

Four sided architecture  
Engage corner conditions  
Appropriate buffers to residential districts  
Cohesive streetscape elements  
Hierarchy of buildings  
Background buildings are important – not all buildings should be designed to call attention  
Designs should not compete with significant civic and historic buildings  
Parking located behind buildings  
Four season landscape design  
Appropriate attention to architectural detail  
Use of compatible and quality materials

## V. Quality of Design

**Lakewood's commercial districts shall have well designed buildings of high quality materials, thoughtful detailing and have the potential to be effectively reused. The existing historic building stock should be retained, re-used, and rehabilitated.**

Four-sided design is encouraged to utilize and make aesthetically pleasing all building elevations. Building rehabilitation and new construction shall include the appropriate high quality treatment of all visible elevations. The design, construction methods, and materials used in rehabilitation work should be appropriate to the period of construction of a building.

### **Fundamental Concepts**

Building materials for new and rehabilitated structures should compliment and be compatible with existing historic buildings. Inappropriate building materials include stucco or EIFS, split face concrete masonry units, jumbo brick and vinyl siding. Design that is contextual and brings visual interest to the streetscape should be encouraged. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* shall be used to guide the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Demolition of historic buildings is discouraged.

### **Design Elements**

Maintain or reinstate bulkheads, storefronts, transoms, doors, windows, cornices and parapets. Maintain or reinstate ratio and rhythm of doors and windows along visible elevations. Maintain unused secondary door locations in storefronts.

Maintain or reinstate original interior ceiling heights. Ceilings shall not be dropped in front of window openings or transoms. Where necessary, dropped ceilings shall be held off the storefront walls.

Where appropriate, new construction and additions shall provide a transition, such as a setback or graduated height increase, to buffer visual effect and feeling when adjacent to an historic building.

Appropriate, traditional, quality building materials shall be used for repair, rehabilitation and new construction.