

**17.06.040 – Standards and Guidelines – CBD1 and CBD2 districts**

**A. Standards and Guidelines for Site Design**

**1. Building Placement and Lot Coverage**

Intent: Establish site development patterns that are compatible with the historic patterns of downtown St. Charles, while allowing the flexibility necessary to produce more intense, mixed use development that will foster a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Guidelines:

- a. A building within the Downtown Overlay district should occupy at least 70%, and, whenever possible, 100%, of the width of its street frontage. Where buildings or parts of buildings are placed more than five feet from the right-of-way line or property line, a pedestrian space between the building and the street should be created that is 16 to 20 feet deep, and should be occupied by an active use (outdoor eating and drinking or outdoor sales) or a public space (a small park or plaza).
- b. The sides of buildings facing the river should be publicly accessible to the greatest extent possible, at the first floor level. This may result in more than one “front door” for some businesses.
- c. Buildings should be oriented towards zones of pedestrian activity, with primary entrances facing directly onto the street at street level.
- d. To maintain historic patterns of building development in downtown St. Charles, building footprints should not occupy more than 75% of a block.

**2. Parking and Service Areas**

Intent: Provide adequate parking and service areas to serve development without overbuilding parking or overwhelming the pedestrian character desired for downtown.

Standards:

- a. Surface parking lots shall not be located between buildings and the street, but may instead be located behind or beside buildings.
- b. Private surface parking lots shall not be located directly adjacent to the river. Where parking must be located near the river, there shall be a landscaped area, preferably with pedestrian amenities, between the parking lot and the river.
- c. Service and loading facilities shall be oriented and/or screened so that they are not visible from public streets.

Guidelines:

- a. Where a lot or use is eligible for the parking exemption (Section 17.24.080), on site parking is discouraged. Where parking is provided, its design and location should minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment. Perimeter landscaping or decorative walls for screening, parking courtyards, and use of brick or other decorative pavers for surfaces, are examples of ways to accomplish this.
- b. Vehicle access to parking structures, parking lots, and service areas should not be directly from arterial streets.
- c. Where private parking is necessary, shared and joint-use parking should be pursued to minimize private surface parking.
- d. Pedestrian zones along sidewalks should be protected with landscaping and street furniture within the sidewalk right of way, and should be supplemented with a row of parallel or diagonal parking between the sidewalk and the traffic lanes.

**B. Standards and Guidelines for Building Design**

**1. Building Design, Massing and Detail**

Intent: New buildings should reflect the architectural heritage of downtown without copying historic architecture, and should be “of their own time.” Buildings also should be of high quality and enduring value, so that in the future, they are as revered as the landmark buildings in the rest of downtown. While the design standards and guidelines do not encourage the replication of historic structures, they do promote compatibility with the character of existing buildings in downtown.

Standard:

- a. Plastic or backlit awnings shall not be used. While the use of more traditional awning materials and forms is encouraged, the width and height of awnings shall be related to the window openings and design of the building.

Guidelines:

- a. New buildings should not present a barren landscape of rooftop mechanical equipment and

expanses of unadorned flat roofs when viewed from upper floors of existing buildings. The patterns, materials and details of roofs and rooftops should foster views or become viewed elements in themselves, such as rooftop gardens. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be organized and located or screened to be visually consistent with the patterns, materials and details of the structure.

- b. In the Downtown Overlay district and other areas intended to have more intense pedestrian activity, buildings should be designed so that street level and second stories are predominantly windows; street level facades, and facades facing the river or open space, should be a minimum of 50% transparent glass. Facades facing publicly accessible walkways, but not facing streets should be a minimum of 25% transparent glass; upper floors should also contain transparent glass (30% or more); the use of mirrored, tinted or opaque glass or spandrel panels in new buildings to fulfill this guideline is not acceptable. (Spandrel glass may have acceptable applications for other purposes.)
- c. For buildings greater than four stories or 50 feet in height, higher stories should be stepped back from street level facades a minimum of six feet and a maximum of sixteen feet.
- d. Design the lower levels of buildings with pedestrian scale, and a sense of human hand and craft rather than machine production; distinguish the street level of the building from upper levels through the use of an intermediate cornice, a change in building materials or detailing, an awning, trellis or arcade, or lintels at upper level windows. Building entrances should be designed as a prominent feature of the building.
- e. Retail and entertainment uses should open directly onto a public street or publicly accessible pedestrian way (rather than through an interior lobby).
- f. Use earth tones or muted colors in the materials used for building exteriors. The goal is to achieve a design where no single building stands out or overpowers the views or the natural landscape of the valley. Lighter colors or bright colors should be used only in minor accents.
- g. Employ building focal points or "landmark" elements (clock towers, turrets or other architectural devices) with discretion. The use of elements such as gratuitous clock towers or fake dormers is discouraged.
- h. The development of usable rooftop spaces is encouraged. The height of rooftop arbors or garden features should not be considered in the height of the building, but should not exceed 12 feet in height. Such features should be set back from facades facing public rights-of-way at least 10 feet so they are less visible from ground level. Enclosed structures on the roof, including those used for access, should not exceed 20% of the roof area, and "open" roof structures such as arbors or other structures to provide partial shade should not exceed 30% of the roof area.

## 2. Materials

Intent: Use building materials in a meaningful way, but not in ways that result in a false representation of history.

Guidelines:

- a. The use of brick and stone as dominant materials in a building is highly encouraged. In general, brick and stone should be the predominant materials for buildings within the CBD-1 District, while more wood and other compatible materials are acceptable in the CBD-2 District.
- b. Mortar should generally match the color of the brick or stone.
- c. Accent materials used in parapets, lintels, cornices, sills, bases and decorative building elements should be brick, stone, cast stone or architectural precast concrete, wood (except that wood shall not be used at parapets), untreated copper, terra cotta, or dark colored prefinished metal.
- d. High quality pre-cast concrete and high quality metal (with a matte or non-lustre finish) and synthetic materials may also be acceptable on an individual basis, provided such materials constitute less than 20 percent of the exterior and should be used in combination with other acceptable materials.
- e. Reflective or mirrored glass is prohibited; only transparent glass should be used for street level windows.

## 3. Franchise Architecture

Intent: Preclude the development of new uses that employ franchise architecture, corporate colors or symbols other than signage to identify their presence. Avoid standardized designs that do not fit in within the context of community character and neighboring development.

Guideline:

- a. Franchise or corporate architecture should be avoided unless it is compatible with the Standards and Guidelines applicable to the downtown districts. Customized, site specific designs should be provided for all development within downtown St Charles.

C. Standards and Guidelines for Public Spaces

1. Views and View Corridors

Intent: New development should be located or designed to maintain significant sight lines to the river and to prominent landmark buildings.

Guideline:

- a. New buildings in the downtown area should not intrude into view corridors along First Street to the Hotel Baker, along street rights-of-way or extensions thereof toward the Fox River, or from other streets and public spaces toward other prominent community landmarks.

2. Streetscape and Public Spaces

Intent: Where private development involves improvements to public property, establish continuity and identity through a quality streetscape design that results in a truly pedestrian friendly environment and that creates a sense of place.

Standards:

- a. Public sidewalks shall be designed to support pedestrian movement and allow for a variety of activities such as sitting, conversing, people watching, etc. via streetscape enhancements; sidewalk widths along public streets shall generally be 12 feet or more in width.
- b. Pole-mounted or building mounted lighting shall be designed at a pedestrian scale, and that is compatible with the historic character of the area.
- c. Street crossings (or even intersections) shall be enhanced with pavement materials, colors or textures that highlight the crossing as a pedestrian zone.

Guidelines:

1. a. Create plazas, courtyards and other urban open spaces for buildings with a footprint larger than 10,000 square feet; surround public spaces with uses that activate the space, such as street level retail facing onto the space, housing, or eating and drinking venues.
2. b. Avoid the creation of large, singular spaces; rather, create a series of smaller spaces that offer opportunities for a variety of activities and views.
3. c. Spaces between buildings should not become "leftover" spaces; rather the design of the space should invite pedestrians with thoughtful pedestrian features or simply by the craft and detail of the buildings along the space.
4. d. Provide seating at the rate of one linear foot per linear foot of perimeter of the open space; provide "perches" that allow viewing of activity in the space; at least half of the seating in the space should be "found" seating (steps, walls, planter edges). Movable seating is also highly desirable.

3. Pedestrian Movement

Intent: Foster pedestrian movement and activity by protecting pedestrian spaces from intrusions and providing elements that offer comfort for pedestrians.

Guidelines:

1. Primary pedestrian movement routes should be reinforced with wayfinding devices (special pavements, signs, graphics).
2. Utility functions (electrical transformers and switchgear, signal control boxes) should be placed underground, within buildings, or along cross streets to avoid conflicts with pedestrian movement and views.
3. Provide "protection" for the pedestrian zone in the form of bollards, large planters, or trees where parking is not allowed along a street.
4. Provide overhead cover for pedestrians; use arcades, building projections or awnings to afford a minimal level of protection from the environment; cover extending over the sidewalk (awnings) should be located between 9 feet and 12 feet above the walk, and should project over not more than one-third the width of the walk (but not less than 4 feet). Such overhead cover should be coordinated with the locations of street trees and street lights. Cover afforded by an arcade (a covered passageway along the street side of a building) should maintain a series of building columns at the sidewalk edge, and should be a minimum of 5 feet deep but no deeper than 2/3 the height of the arcade.

4. Landscape and Public Art

Intent: Enhance developed areas with landscaping, public art, and unique features that tell the stories and commemorate the heritage of St. Charles.

Standards:

- a. Comply with the provisions of Chapter 17.26, Landscaping and Screening.
- b. Refuse and recycling containers shall be located away from the streets and pedestrian areas and shall be screened from the street view in compliance with Section 17.26.120 (Additional

Screening Requirements).

Guidelines:

1. a. Develop landscape patterns that are shaped as spaces for people (pocket parks, courtyards and urban open spaces and gardens) as opposed to more suburban landscape treatments such as berm plantings and vegetative buffers.
2. b. Use Public Art to tell stories about the heritage, people and events of the community, and the natural history of the region. Public art can be made purposeful, as well. For example, sculpture may double as a seating surface, manhole covers might convey messages about nature, and wide sidewalks or street intersections might become tableaux for art.