

CO—COMMERCIAL OLD TOWN ZONE DISTRICT

The guidelines contained within this chapter apply to all properties within the CO Zone District.

Introduction

While new construction should be compatible with the traditional character of the area, designs should not copy early styles but instead should seek creative new solutions. At the same time, the fundamental principles of traditional design must be respected. This means that each project should strike a balance in the design variables that are presented in the following pages.

Building Width

Many of the traditional buildings along Lincoln Avenue in the CO Zone District were designed to fill the entire width of one or more lots. Although building depths varied from site to site, all of them were aligned along Lincoln Avenue. This helped to establish a relatively uniform scale for the district and, since these buildings were evenly spaced along the street, a sense of rhythm resulted. Therefore, the perceived width of a new building should appear similar in size to that of traditional buildings in the area in order to help maintain this sense of visual continuity.

Building & Roof Form

A similarity of building forms also contributes to a sense of visual continuity along Lincoln Avenue and the adjacent blocks. In order to maintain this feature, a new building should have basic roof and building forms that are similar to those seen traditionally on the street. Overall facade proportions also should be in harmony with the context.

The character of a roof is also a major feature of traditional buildings. When repeated, the similar roof forms contribute to the sense of visual continuity. In each case, the roof pitch, its materials, size and orientation are all important to the overall character of a building. New construction should not break from this continuity. Therefore, new structures and their roof forms should be similar in character to their traditional neighbors.

Solid-to-Void Ratio

While most buildings along Lincoln Avenue are constructed of masonry, some structures in the district are simple wood frame construction. Because of the limited structural spans associated with wood construction, often one lot width, most openings are smaller and rectilinear.

Materials

Building materials of new structures and additions to existing buildings should contribute to the visual continuity of the neighborhood by reflecting the scale and texture of traditional materials. While new materials may be considered, they should appear similar to those seen traditionally.

Architectural Details

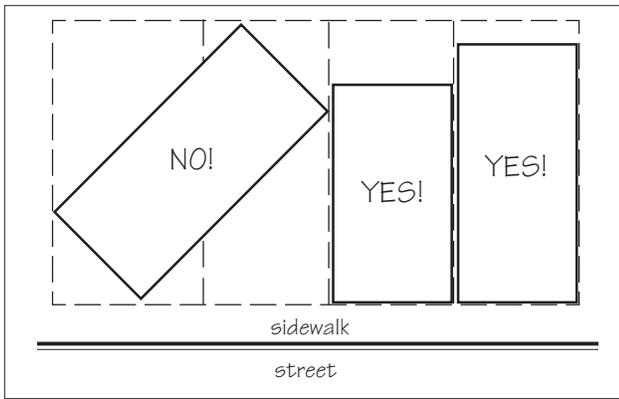
Entries are clearly defined on most structures. Several of the traditional commercial buildings along Lincoln Avenue have recessed entries which help to create a sense of rhythm along the street. Other architectural details also contribute to the sense of character of the street, adding visual interest for pedestrians. Their continued use is strongly encouraged.

Windows & Doors

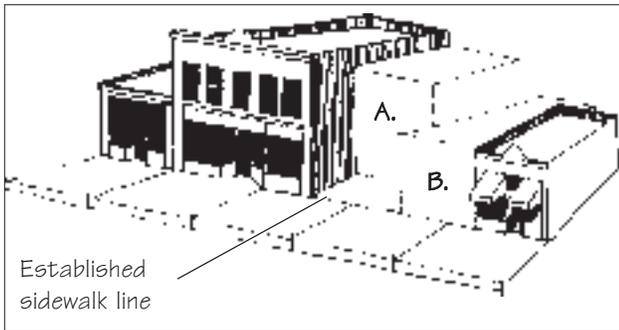
The similarity of window and door sizes and locations contributes to a sense of visual continuity along the street. In order to maintain this sense of visual continuity, a new building should maintain the basic window and door proportions and placement patterns seen traditionally in the district.

The design objectives for the CO Zone District are:

- To maintain the definition of the street edge,
- To maintain a traditional sense of scale,
- To accommodate new development that is compatible with traditional commercial storefront type buildings.



Orient a building parallel to its lot lines.



A. Inappropriate: This project does not maintain the alignment of building facades at the established sidewalk line.
 B. Appropriate: This building maintains the alignment of building facades at the established sidewalk line.



Maintain the alignment of facades at the sidewalk's edge.



Open space may be considered along the sidewalk if at least 70% of the building facade maintains alignment at the sidewalk edge.

Context & Orientation

CO.1 Respect traditional settlement patterns.

- Site a new building in a way similar to traditional buildings in the area. This includes consideration of building setbacks, entry orientation and outdoor areas.

CO.2 Orient a new building parallel to its lot lines, similar to that of traditional building orientations.

- The front of a primary structure shall be oriented to the street.

CO.3 Maintain the alignment of facades at the sidewalk's edge.

- Locate the front building wall at the established sidewalk line.
- Where a portion of a building must be set back from the sidewalk, use landscaping and/or other urban features to define the sidewalk edge.

CO.4 Retain the character of the alley as a part of the original town grid.

- Maintain the alley as an open lane.
- Alleys also may be used as pedestrian ways.

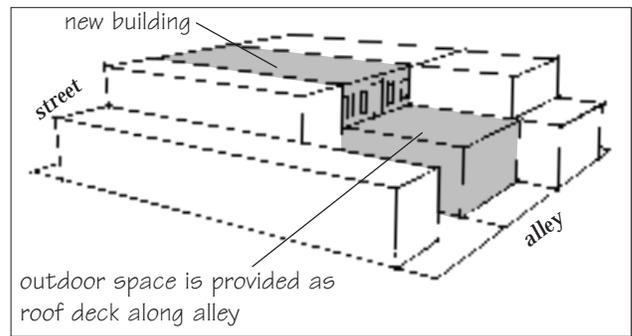
CO.5 Orient a primary entrance toward the street.

- A building shall have a clearly defined primary entrance. For most commercial buildings, this should be a recessed entry way.
- Do not orient a primary entrance to an interior court.
- Providing secondary public entrances to commercial spaces is also encouraged on larger buildings.

Active Outdoor Space

CO.6 Develop active outdoor space that promotes pedestrian use.

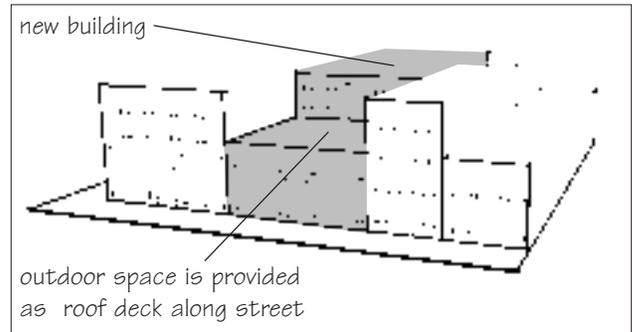
- The development of first and second floor roof-top-decks is encouraged.
- A sunken plaza on the street side is prohibited.
- Entrances to interior courtyards shall have the appearance and scale of normal storefront openings.
- Courtyards shall be accessible and visible from the public way and shall be designed for public uses.



Consider providing outdoor space that opens onto alleys or side streets.

CO.7 Provide landscape features in an active outdoor space.

- For every 200 square feet of active outdoor space, provide one of the following:
 - One planter, with a foot print a minimum of 4 square feet,
 - One bench,
 - Two chairs,
 - Information kiosk or
 - One tree



To encourage pedestrian activity consider providing a roof-top-deck.

Building Mass and Scale

CO.8 Maintain the average perceived building scale at the sidewalk.

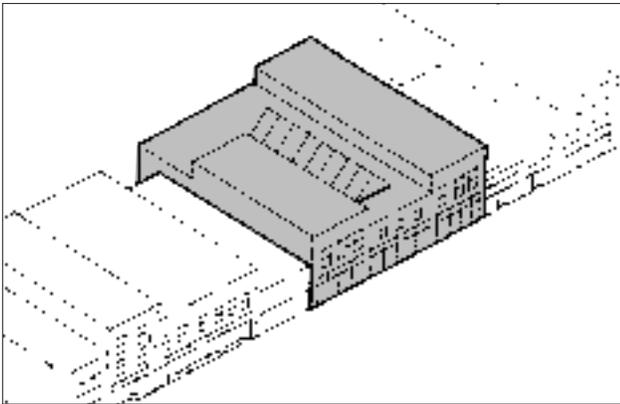
- The predominant mass of new construction may present a one to two-story facade at the front property line.
- Any third floor element shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the sidewalk edge along Lincoln Avenue.
- Floor-to-floor heights shall appear to be similar to those seen traditionally. First floor heights should be between 10 feet and 15 feet and display windows at the street level shall appear similar in height to those seen traditionally.



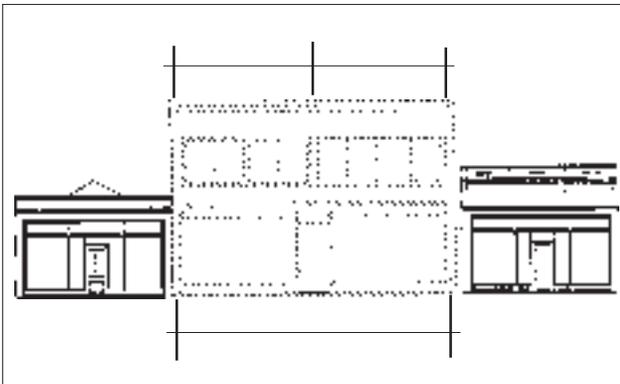
The predominate mass of new construction shall present a one to two story facade at the front property line.



Organize the building mass to maintain views to civic landmarks and allow solar access.



This proposed infill building is divided into smaller building modules in order to relate to the widths of traditional buildings in the area.



A larger building may be divided into "modules" that reflect the traditional scale of construction.

CO.9 Organize the building mass to maintain views to civic landmarks and allow solar access.

- Landmarks include Howelsen Hill and designated historic structures.
- The third floor of a building mass shall be set back 15 feet from the building face, from either Lincoln Avenue or a cross street where significant views will be maintained.

CO.10 Divide larger buildings into “modules” that are similar in width to buildings seen traditionally.

- Where buildings are planned to exceed the traditional width (25’ to 50’), use a change in one or more of the following design features to reflect traditional building widths:
 - changes in facade material,
 - window design,
 - facade height or
 - decorative details.

These variations should be expressed throughout the depth of the structure such that the composition appears to be a collection of smaller buildings.

Building Form

CO.11 Rectangular forms shall be dominant on Lincoln Avenue facades.

- The facade shall appear as predominantly flat, with any decorative elements and projecting or setback “articulations” appearing to be subordinate to the dominant form.

CO.12 Use flat roof lines as the dominant roof form.

- A flat roof, or one that gently slopes to the rear of a site, shall be the dominant roof form.

Repetition of Facade Elements

CO.13 The general alignment of horizontal features on building fronts shall be maintained.

- Align window moldings, tops of display windows, cornices, copings and parapets at the tops of buildings.
- When large buildings are designed to appear as several buildings, there shall be some slight variation between the facade elements, for example: a change in molding style, slight variations in color, alignment or an offset of a belt course (projecting vs. inset) may be considered.

CO.14 Maintain the repetition of similar shapes and details along the block.

- Upper story windows shall have a vertical emphasis. In general, they should be twice as tall as they are wide. These proportions are within a limited range; therefore, upper story windows in new construction should relate to the window proportions seen on traditional commercial building facades.
- Headers and sills of windows on new buildings shall maintain the traditional placement relative to cornices and belt courses.

CO.15 Maintain the pattern created by recessed entry ways that are repeated along a block.

- Set the door back from the front an adequate amount to establish a distinct threshold for pedestrians.
- Where entries are recessed, the building line at the sidewalk edge shall be maintained by the upper floor(s).
- Use transoms over doorways to maintain the full vertical height of the storefront.



Maintain the pattern created by recessed entry ways that are repeated along a block.



Rectangular forms shall be dominant on Lincoln Avenue facades.



Maintain the repetition of similar shapes and building widths along the block.



Contemporary interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.



A contemporary design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among traditional buildings without copying them is preferred.



Contemporary interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.

Storefront Character

CO.16 Contemporary interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.

- A contemporary design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among traditional buildings without copying them is preferred. This will allow them to be seen as products of their own time and yet be compatible with their traditional neighbors.
- In essence, infill should be a balance of new and old in design.

CO.17 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

- Use contemporary commercial storefronts to provide pedestrian interest along the street. Storefronts shall include the following elements:
 - primary entrance,
 - display windows,
 - kickplates,
 - transoms and
 - midbelt courses.
- A minimum of 60% of the surface area of the street wall on Lincoln Avenue shall be transparent glass.
- Also consider providing public art, wall murals or landscaping the sidewalk edge to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- The primary building entrance shall be at street level.



Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

CO.18 Maintain the distinction between the street level and the upper floor.

- The first floor of the primary facade shall be predominantly transparent glass, similar to a traditional storefront.
- Upper floors shall be perceived as being more opaque than the street level.
- Highly reflective or darkly tinted glass is inappropriate.
- Express the traditional distinction in floor heights between street levels and upper levels through detailing, materials and fenestration. The presence of a midbelt course is an important feature in this relationship.

Alley Facades

CO.19 Develop alley facades to create visual interest.

- Use varied building setbacks and changes in materials to create interest and reduce perceived scale.
- Balconies, court yards and decks are also encouraged.
- Providing secondary public entrances is strongly encouraged along alleys. These should be covered or protected and clearly intended for public use, but subordinate in detail to the primary entrance that faces the street.

CO.20 Along a rear facade, using building forms that step down in scale toward the alley is encouraged.

- Consider using additive forms, such as sheds, stairs and decks to reduce the perceived scale. These forms shall however, remain subordinate to the primary structure.
- Use projecting roofs at the ground floor over entrances, decks and for separate utility structures in order to establish a human scale that invites pedestrian activity.



The first floor of the primary facade shall be predominantly transparent glass, similar to a traditional storefront. Upper floors shall be perceived as being more opaque than the street level. Upper story windows shall have a vertical emphasis.



Building forms that step down in scale to the alley are encouraged.



Painted wood is appropriate as a primary material.



Brick is an appropriate primary material.



Special features that highlight buildings on corner lots may be considered.

Building Materials

CO.21 Use building materials that are similar to those used traditionally.

- Brick, stone and painted wood are appropriate as primary materials.
- New products that convey a scale, finish and character similar to traditional materials and that have a proven durability in the Steamboat Springs climate also may be considered.
- A large featureless surface or panelized products that lack a sense of scale are prohibited.
- A plaster finish may be used, when it is detailed to express visual interest and convey a sense of human scale. Coverage shall not exceed 40% of any exposed wall surface.

Building Features

CO.22 Special features that highlight buildings on corner lots may be considered.

- Develop both street elevations to provide visual interest to pedestrians.
- Corner entrances, decorative windows and towers are examples of elements that may be considered to emphasize corner locations.
- Store front windows, display cases and other elements that provide visual interest to facades shall be provided along side streets.

Awnings

CO.23 The use of an awning on a commercial building may be considered.

- An awning should be mounted above or within the storefront opening, in some cases they may be mounted within individually framed window openings. They should respect the alignment of other traditional storefront awnings on the street.
- Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings. Avoid exotic forms that are not traditionally found in the commercial core area of Steamboat Springs.
- Coordinate the color of the awning with the color scheme for the entire building.
- A fabric with a matte finish, similar in appearance to traditional canvass, is appropriate. High gloss finishes are inappropriate.



The use of an awning on a commercial building may be considered.

Parking

CO.24 Minimize the use of curb cuts along the street.

- No new curb cuts are permitted on Lincoln Avenue. Curb cuts on side streets may be needed to provide access to existing parking areas, but their use should be minimized.
- Primary access to a parking area shall be from an alley; however, access from a cross street may be considered when the layout requires doing so.
- Plan parking areas and vehicular access in a manner that utilizes existing curb cuts.
- Share a driveway with an adjacent property when feasible.

CO.25 Parking areas shall not be visually obtrusive.

- Locate parking areas behind a building.
- Where an existing parking area abuts a public sidewalk or street is to be improved, provide one or more of the following buffers:
 - A landscaped strip or planter that is a minimum of 5' in depth, and is planted with a combination of trees and shrubs,
 - a fence (4' max. height),
 - planter (3' max. height, 3' min. wide),
 - hedge or
 - site wall (4' max. height) that has a decorative finish and details.
- Materials for site walls and planters shall be masonry, with a matte finish and earth tone color. Appropriate materials are:
 - rough cut (ashlar) stone,
 - river rock,
 - textured concrete block,
 - textured formed concrete and
 - brick.
- Divide large parking lots with planting areas.
- Automobile headlight illumination from parking areas shall be screened from adjacent lots and the street.

Site Lighting

CO.26 Minimize the visual impacts of building lighting.

- Wall mounted light fixtures shall not extend above the height of the wall to which they are mounted.
- Blinking, flashing lights and exposed strip lighting used to illuminate building facades or to outline buildings are prohibited. (Exception: Temporary decorative lights may be allowed for up to an eight-week period during the calendar year.)
- Also avoid locating blinking, flashing and other animated lights inside street-facing windows.

CO.27 Canopies and awnings shall not be illuminated.

- Internally illuminated awnings are prohibited.
- Lights shall not be mounted on the tops, sides or fascias of canopies and awnings.
- Luminaires shall be recessed into any canopy structure that is designated for pedestrian use, loading or service, unless a suitable alternative that will minimize impacts is approved.

Signs

CO.28 Consider the building front as part of the overall sign program.

- A sign shall be in scale and proportion to the building, such that it does not dominate the appearance.
- Coordinate a sign within the overall facade composition. Locate it where it will emphasize design elements of the building facade. For example, use a horizontal sign shape to help reinforce the horizontal lines of moldings and transoms seen along the street.

CO.29 A flush-mounted wall sign may be considered.

- When feasible, place a wall sign such that it aligns with others on the block.

CO.30 A projecting sign may be considered.

- A small projecting sign shall be located near the business entrance, just above the door or to the side of it.

CO.31 Using a symbol sign is encouraged.

- A symbol sign adds interest to the street, can be read quickly and is remembered better than written words.
- However, corporate logos are prohibited.

CO.32 A window sign may be considered

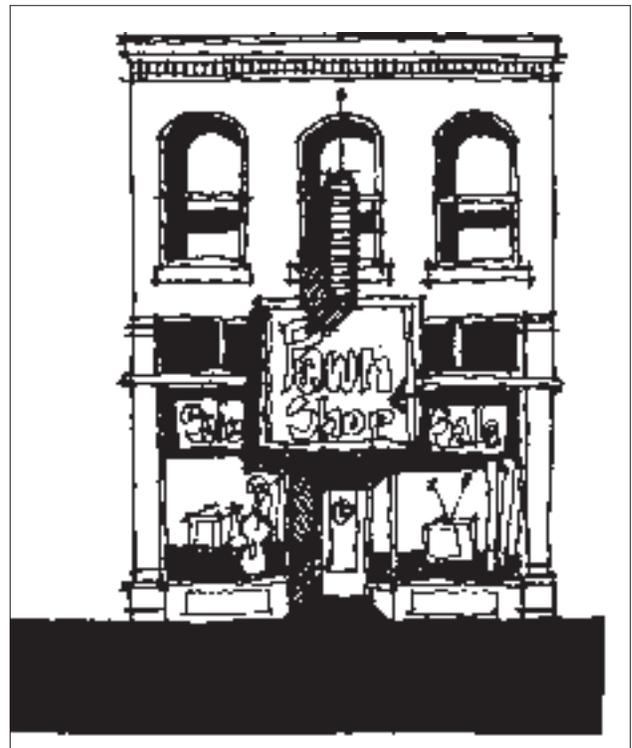
- A window sign may be painted on or applied to a window or it may be located to hang just inside the window.

CO.33 A directory sign may be considered.

- Group small, individual signs on a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate.

CO.34 Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the primary building facade.

- Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs.
- Highly reflective materials that would be difficult to read are inappropriate.



Inappropriate: This sign is not in scale or proportion to the building facade. It also covers significant building features.



Appropriate: A projecting sign may be considered.



Appropriate: A window sign may be considered.



Appropriate: Indirect lighting is preferred for a sign.



Appropriate: A symbol sign may be considered.

CO.35 A simple sign design is preferred.

- Use colors for the sign that are compatible with those of the building front.

CO.36 Indirect lighting is preferred for a sign.

- Indirect lighting (i.e., that which is directed at a sign from an external, shielded lamp) is preferred.
- A warm light similar to daylight is preferred.

CO.37 If internal illumination is used, it shall be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- Internal illumination of an entire sign panel is prohibited. If internal illumination is used, a system that backlights sign text only is preferred.
- Neon (gas-fired) and other tubular illumination may be considered. However, use neon in limited amounts so that it does not become visually obtrusive.

Mechanical Equipment & Service Areas

CO.38 Minimize the visual impacts of service areas as seen from the street.

- Screen service areas from view.
- This includes locations for trash containers and loading docks.

CO.39 Minimize the visual impacts of mechanical equipment as seen from the public way.

- Screen mechanical equipment from view. Screen ground-mounted units with fences, stone walls or hedges. Where rooftop units are visible, provide screening with materials that are compatible with those of the building itself. Locating window air conditioning units in the primary facade is prohibited.
- Use low-profile mechanical units on rooftops so they will not be visible from the street or alley. Also minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes. Use smaller satellite dishes and mount them low to the ground and away from street facades, significant building facades or highly visible roof planes.
- Use muted colors on telecommunications and mechanical equipment that will minimize their appearance by blending with their backgrounds. (See related city ordinances.)