

BLACK DIAMOND DESIGN GUIDELINES

for

Commercial Zones



Adopted June 18, 2009

Commercial Zones

Introduction and Purpose

This section of the Design Standards and Guidelines focuses on site planning and design guidance for the Commercial Zones of the city. These standards and guidelines serve to promote successful and vibrant commercial activity in the city while maintaining the rural and historic character that defines Black Diamond.

Site Design

Site design in Commercial Zones serves to orient buildings and transportation corridors in a way that allows for pedestrian and vehicular access while screening undesirable features such as trash areas and parking lots. A focus on landscaping and connectivity to adjacent uses will be stressed to meet the overall site design objectives.

Building Design

Building design in Commercial Zones will be compatible with the historic and rural context of the City of Black Diamond. These standards and guidelines ensure the objectives are met by addressing building design features individually to maintain pedestrian friendly and visually appealing commercial areas that cater to residents and visitors alike.

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Storefronts and entrances should enhance the activity on the street



Pulling back the entrance from the corner and providing additional sidewalk and landscaping

A. Orientation to the Street

Intent

The life of the commercial district is closely tied to the character of its public space. Collectively, buildings configure and shape the streetscape and other open spaces. New buildings should be located towards the street, near the sidewalk to promote community commercial activity, and to heighten the presence and improve the identity of commercial areas.

Guidelines

1. Locate and orient buildings to define public streets and civic spaces. Locate buildings close to the sidewalk and limit gaps to the minimum necessary to accommodate parking and access. Allow larger developments to pull back from the street edge for plazas and entry fore-courts. Plazas, courtyards and other pedestrian space shall include at least three of the following:
 - a. Special landscape
 - b. Pedestrian scale bollards
 - c. Accent lighting
 - d. Special paving, such as colored/stained concrete, brick or other unit paver
 - e. Seating, such as benches, tables or low seating walls
 - f. Water feature
2. Provide clear, recessed main building or shop entrances that do not interrupt street and/or retail continuity.
3. Set buildings back at the corners of inter-sections from the corner property lines at the ground floor to allow for both a more generous sidewalk and additional street landscaping to support a high level of activity and visibility.

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A. Parking Lots

Intent

To locate parking in a manner that is as visually unobtrusive as possible and provides safe, convenient access without detracting from the pedestrian environment.

Guidelines

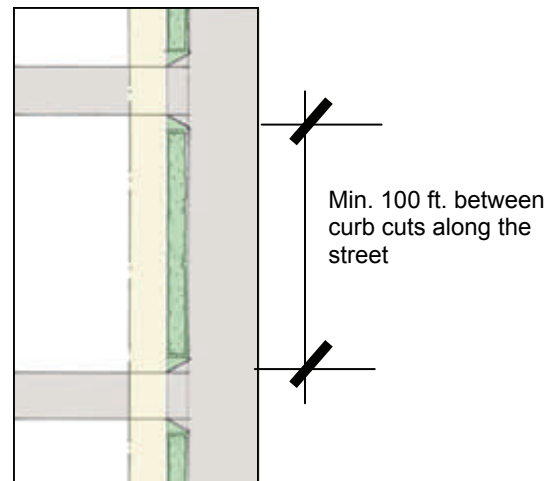
1. Parking lots shall be located behind or to the side of buildings.
2. Parking lots shall not abut street intersections (corner lots).
3. Parking lots located beside buildings shall be screened from the right-of-way with one or more of the following treatments:
 - a. Landscaping to sufficiently screen the first 3 feet in height.
 - b. Low walls made of decorative concrete, masonry, or other similar material and not exceeding a height of 3 feet.
 - c. Raised planter walls planted with a minimum of 80% evergreen shrubs not to exceed 3 feet in height.
4. Reduce visual impact of surface parking lots.
 - a. Where the parking lot is located to the side of the building and partially abuts the public right-of-way, one tree for every six spaces shall be provided;
 - b. Where the parking is behind the building and not visible from the public right-of-way, one tree for every eight spaces shall be provided.

note: no planting strip shall be less than 3 feet wide; 6 feet if trees are included

5. Enhance pedestrian safety by reducing and consolidating driveways, while providing for adequate access:
 - a. Distance between curb cuts should not be less than 100 feet.
 - b. The sidewalk pattern and material shall continue across the driveway.
6. Adjacent developments shall make every effort to share driveways.



Parking lot screened with low walls and landscaping



Pedestrian connections shall be maintained in larger parking lots

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Connections provide safety and comfort through large sites



Clear sight-lines to entrances and public areas

B. Pedestrian Connections

Intent

The commercial district should connect through a network of public spaces and paths. New development should improve the pedestrian environment by making it easier, safer, and more comfortable to walk between businesses, to the sidewalk, to transit stops, and through parking lots.

Guidelines

1. Pedestrian connections shall be clearly defined with a combination of two or more of the following elements:
 - a. 6 inch vertical curb in combination with a raised walkway.
 - b. trellis, special railing, bollards, and/or other architectural features to accent the walkway at key points.
 - c. continuous landscape area minimum 3 feet wide (6 feet minimum if trees are included) on at least one side of the walkway.
2. Provide adequate building lighting at entries and along all walkways and paths through parking lots.
3. Pedestrian walkways shall include clear sight-lines to building entrances and shall not be less than 4 feet wide.

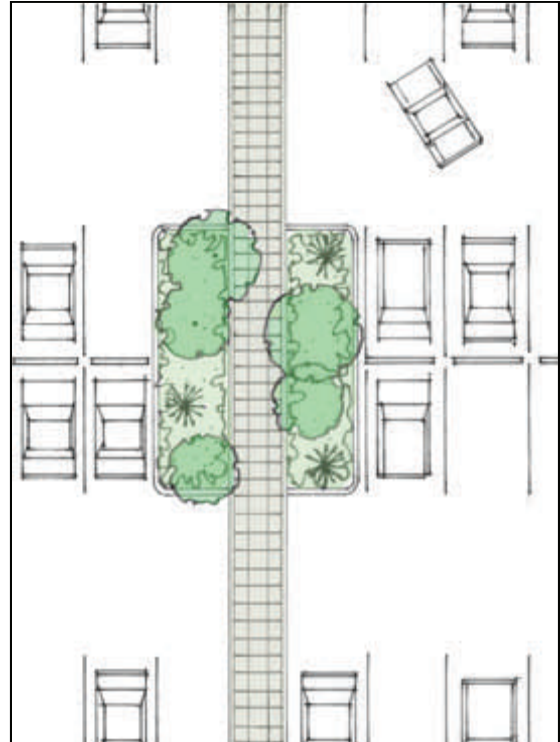
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Pedestrian Connections *continued*

Guidelines

4. On-Site Pedestrian Circulation
 - a. Pedestrian paths or walkways shall be provided connecting all businesses and the entries of multiple buildings on the same development site.
 - b. Pathways and crosswalks shall be provided through parking lots along every fourth parking aisle or at intervals of not less than 150 feet.
 - c. Contrasting surface materials shall be used for pathways to delineate pedestrian areas from travel lanes.
5. Site Integration with Transit Facilities
 - a. Extra space for waiting areas shall be provided with benches, newspaper and bicycle racks, trash receptacles, a clock, bus schedule. Pavement for expanded waiting areas may be located within required setbacks and may count as landscape areas.
 - b. Integration of transit shelter into the building by providing overhead weather protection (building canopy) with appropriate height and depth, and lean bars affixed to the base of the building.



On-Site Pedestrian Circulation



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C. Screening of Trash and Service Areas

Intent

To reduce the impact of service, loading, and trash/recycling areas.

Guidelines

1. Service, loading and trash/recycling collection areas shall be screened from public view with solid evergreen plant material or architectural treatment similar to the design of the adjacent building.
2. Chain link is prohibited.

Note: alternatives may be considered if designs meet the intent and are approved by the Community Development Director



Examples of trash screening areas

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A. Massing

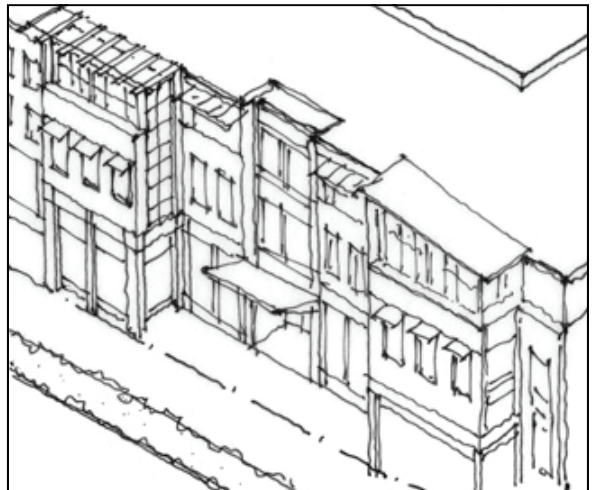
Intent

Give proper consideration to the scale and massing of individual buildings to be compatible with Black Diamond's desired architectural scale and character.

1. Design building volumes appropriate to the scale of their surroundings. In general, break down the scale and massing of larger buildings.
 - a. All new buildings with a wall of 60 lineal feet or more, facing a public right-of-way, shall create a 5 ft. minimum jog in those facades visible from the public right-of-way every 30 feet.
2. Articulate the facade with smaller windows, bays and other projected or recessed design elements as a transition in size to adjacent historic or residential structures that are smaller in scale.
3. Express rooflines as an extension of the building's composition:
 - a. Use a strong, detailed cornice or parapet in conjunction with a flat roof. Modulate the roof line at least every 60 feet.
 - b. Gable, hipped or shed roofs with a slope of at least three ft vertical to twelve ft horizontal are acceptable.
 - c. Other roof forms, such as arched, vaulted, dormer, or saw-toothed may be acceptable provided they don't exceed 60 feet without a change in plane or design.
 - d. Mechanical equipment shall be screened from the public right-of-way by an extended parapet wall or other roof form.



Buildings should reference Black Diamond's small, rural character



Example of building facade modulation standard



Gabled roofline with differentiated materials to articulate

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In this case, the “top” breaks up the perceived bulk of the building

B. Articulation

Intent

To reduce the apparent bulk of multi-story buildings and maintain a pedestrian scale in Commercial zones.

Guidelines

A “base, middle and top” shall be delineated for buildings 25 feet or higher.

1. Create a “base” at ground level using articulation and materials.
2. The “top” of the building will emphasize a distinct profile or outline with elements such as a projecting parapet, cornice, or pitched roofline. In addition, building facades abutting the street shall have an upper level setback at a height 25-50 feet above grade, with a minimum depth of 10 feet.
3. The “middle” of the building may be distinguished by a change in materials or color, windows, balconies, setbacks and signage.

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C. Ground Level Details

Intent

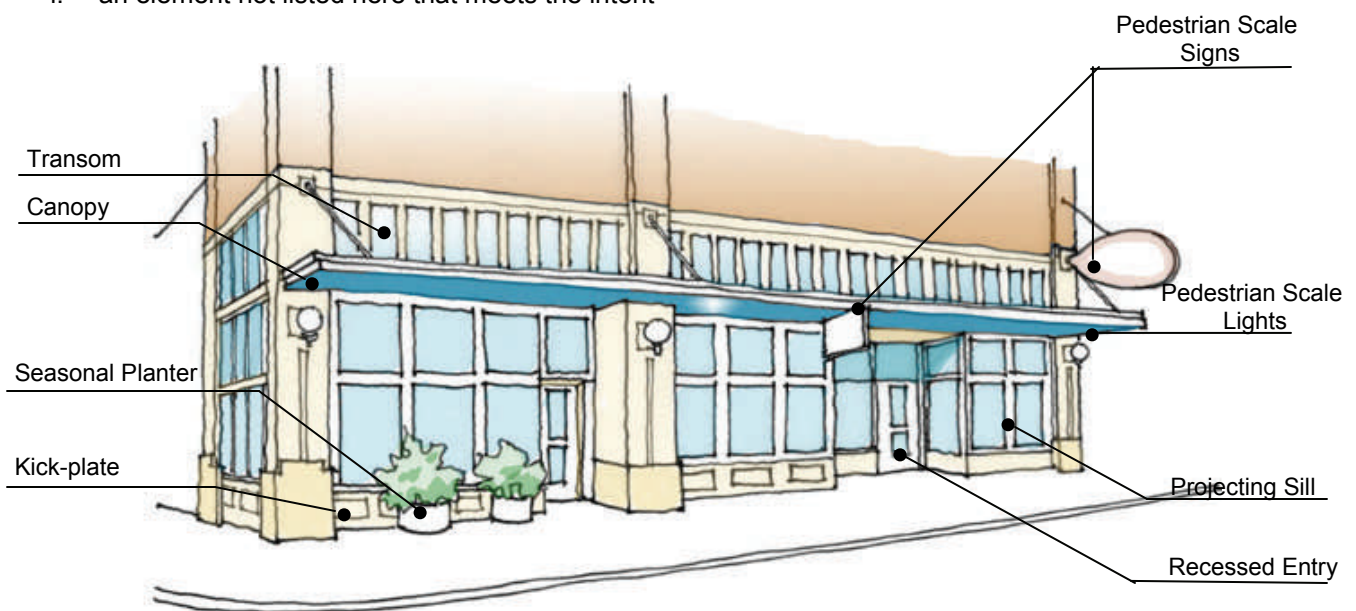
To create a socially and visually stimulating commercial district with street level facades that support pedestrian activity.

Guidelines

1. Promote active, pedestrian-oriented uses with a high degree of transparent window area. Reflective, opaque and highly tinted glass is prohibited.
2. Reinforce the character of the streetscape with the greatest amount of visual interest placed along the ground level of buildings. Facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall be designed to be pedestrian friendly through the inclusion of at least three of the following elements:
 - a. kickplates for storefront windows
 - b. projecting window sills
 - c. pedestrian scale signs
 - d. recessed entry
 - e. canopies
 - f. transom windows
 - g. pedestrian scale lighting
 - h. planters and/or seasonal hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets
 - i. an element not listed here that meets the intent



Good pedestrian oriented ground level detailing improves the street life of a commercial street



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Historic mural work can fit with the character of a commercial area and break up blank walls



D. Blank Wall Treatments

Intent

To reduce the visual impact of blank walls by providing visual interest.

Guidelines

1. Blank walls longer than 30 feet facing streets or visible from residential areas shall incorporate two or more of the following:
 - a. Vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, ground cover And/or vines adjacent to the wall surface;
 - b. Artwork, such as bas-relief sculpture, murals, or trellis;
 - c. Seating area with special paving and seasonal plantings;
 - d. Architectural detailing, reveals, contrasting materials or other special visual interest.

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E. Corner Lots

Intent

To promote civic identity through prominent building features at visible locations.

Guidelines

1. Buildings located at corners of blocks, should be given significant architectural expression in the facade, roof form, massing and orientation, such as:
 - a. tower forms
 - b. peaked roofs
 - c. larger entrances



A significant corner building with unique architectural form can mark entry into the commercial area

