

URBAN DESIGN IN INDIANAPOLIS
Stable and Historic Areas Sub-Committee
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Sub-Committee Draft Recommendations

1. USES, LANDS, OR IMPROVEMENTS THAT SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO REGIONAL CENTER DESIGN REVIEW:

Any uses, lands, or improvements within the the boundaries of the *Indianapolis Regional Center Plan 2020* (Metropolitan Development Commission, March 3, 2004) should be subject to Regional Center design review, except that any uses, lands, or improvements within any locally designated historic preservation areas as established by, and under the jurisdiction of, the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC), should not be subject to the provisions of these recommendations.

2. CONDUCTING THE REGIONAL CENTER DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS:

A volunteer, appointed design review committee, composed of a balance of professionals involved in the design and development of construction projects, should be established to review Regional Center applications and report its recommendations to the Metropolitan Development Commission (MDC).

3. FACTORS THAT SHOULD INITIATE THE REGIONAL CENTER DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS:

- Any new building projects or building modifications;
- Any work done to building facades;
- Any new site designs, or any existing site improvements, that include landscaping, fencing, and lighting;
- Any change of use including change of building use; or
- Any combination of the above.

4. URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES THAT SHOULD GUIDE REGIONAL CENTER DESIGN REVIEW AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL CENTER DESIGN GUIDELINES:

PRINCIPLE I. BUILDING SITING:

Siting and location of new structures should relate to their immediate contexts. They should maintain consistent setbacks and alignments with existing buildings. Sidewalk activity should be reinforced through active entrances and storefronts.

PRINCIPLE II. BUILDINGS SHOULD RELATE IN MASSING AND FORM:

Buildings should provide setbacks and articulation that provide for adequate light and ventilation for the streetscape. The use of these elements should also provide visual relief that reduces massiveness and appropriately scales the proposed buildings to their respective contexts.

PRINCIPLE III. BUILDING TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS:

While diversity and individual design expression is to be encouraged, new infill structures should be good neighbors. Facade organization, rhythm columns, piers, cornice height, bay articulation, window patterns, and entrances should relate to the immediate surrounding contexts. This is not to exclude buildings of mid- and high-rise nature, but they should relate to their context in the above-mentioned manner.

PRINCIPLE IV. ACTIVATED STREETSCAPES:

New structures should encourage street level activity and visual interest. Active street accessible uses should be programmed for street pedestrian level such as commercial retail and service activities. Blank and unrelieved walls should be avoided at the pedestrian level. The primary commercial entrance should be located at grade.

In the central downtown core, buildings should be oriented to the primary shopping streets and maintain a zero setback from the front lot line, except that up to 10 percent of a building's front lot face or 20 contiguous feet of its front lot face may be set back from the front lot line. Entryways should not be more than 10 feet from the front lot line, and businesses are encouraged to serve both the street and the rear parking lot if needed. In some instances, exceptions can be made to the guideline for setback if outdoor dining areas are provided.

PRINCIPLE V. MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF PARKING FACILITIES:

Surface parking should be strongly discouraged. In general, no new surface parking in core commercial areas should be permitted. Surface parking in other areas should be behind buildings. Where new surface parking occurs, it should be screened with permanent materials such as iron, steel, masonry or concrete materials and softened with appropriate landscaping and street trees. Parking garages should have activity at the pedestrian level, such as restaurants or other commercial spaces. The upper levels should be designed within the same consideration given for habitable uses. They should relate to and blend with their surrounding contexts. On-street parking is encouraged and should be retained. In commercial areas, no more than 25 percent to a maximum of 50 feet of a building's front lot line should be faced with driveways. Property owners are encouraged to share driveways where possible.

PRINCIPLE VI. OPEN SPACES:

Open spaces should relate to and encourage pedestrian activity. They should be located in areas of high active use, e.g. City Market West Plaza and Monument Circle. Existing public open space should be preserved as a matter of highest priority. Informational/ retail kiosks, fountains, and vehicular traffic mitigation and control should be encouraged in open spaces.

PRINCIPLE VII. PUBLIC ART & AMENITIES:

Public art and pedestrian amenities have a civilizing effect and help create a sense of identity and friendliness to the public domain. They enrich the experience of the regional center for the resident and the visitor and create a sense of place and image for the community.

PRINCIPLE VIII. ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS:

- A. Openings: Should be articulated and proportioned in a way that is characteristic of the surrounding context.

- B. Building Materials for Primary and Highly Visible Secondary Facades: Preference should be given to natural and fired masonry; transparent-non reflective glazing; rigid steel & aluminum panels; copper, zinc alloy, and slate roofing; precast concrete and cast stone. The following materials are to be discouraged, however, they can be used for accent and repair materials subject to MDC approval:
 - Synthetic stucco
 - Corrugated metal siding
 - Aluminum, vinyl, cementitious and wood siding (except in Historic Districts where certain siding types are permitted)

- C. Detailing and Ornamentation: Appropriate use of detailing whether historic or contemporary should be encouraged. It can be an important element of scale and character and identity of a structure or area.

- D. Color: Color should accent and reinforce the detailing and ornamentation on the structures. In general, color should harmonize with the surrounding context. The use of strong color, either in intensity or value should be applied in limited areas and should be avoided in large structures.

- E. Building Height: A building's height should not prevent sunlight, beyond a reasonable amount, from reaching public open spaces and should not obstruct primary view sheds.

- F. Storefront Windows: Store windows should contain clear glass to allow for visual access of the interior space. Clear glass is defined as 85 percent light transmission factor for the width of the storefront including structural supports for the building. This design guideline should apply to all storefronts. All storefronts should contain this clear transparency factor two feet above grade to 10 feet in height. Store windows should allow for visual penetration into the store for a depth of five feet. Smoked and mirror glass should be avoided in the storefronts.

- G. Security Grates: Security grates are to be discouraged, however, if used all security grates should be placed at the rear of the interior showcase

windows. This allows the street to project a safer image after hours.

- H. Cornices: Cornices of some shape or form should be incorporated into building design to reinforce the “skyline” of the street. The complexity of these elements that make up the skyline will vary with the style of architecture. The cornice should have some articulation from the front façade to create a greater sense of scale within the street.
- I. Roof Top Mechanicals: All roof mounted mechanical systems should not be visible from within 70 feet of adjacent properties or from the public sidewalk across the street, whichever is less. These systems should be screened by a parapet wall or placed on the ground in a screened area. These guidelines are much more relative to lower rise architecture that is found in commercial corridors.
- J. Storefront Entrances: The primary storefront entrances or foyers should be within 10 feet of the front lot line or directly abut the sidewalk. The primary entrance should be given greater emphasis in relation to other entrances. The building may have a recessed entrance but the façade should be a zero setback on the primary shopping street except as permitted under Principle IV. Each storefront should have its own entrance that remains open during business hours.
- K. Flexible Buildings for Future Uses: New construction specialty buildings are generally more difficult to reuse when they become vacant. For example, structures that have a very low ceiling height or specialty floors make it difficult to adapt to future uses. New commercial construction should be flexible and adaptable.
- L. Non-Commercial and Institutional Buildings: In multi-tenant buildings, institutional or other non-commercial uses that do not need display windows or storefronts should still install such spaces along the street edge and move their uses to the rear of the first floor. For example, Grocery stores and theaters could have their primary entrances at the street edge with the rest of their uses set back to the rear of the first floor. Non-commercial and institutional frontage should be limited to no more than 10 percent of the block face.
- M. Contiguous Storefronts: Storefronts should be contiguous to encourage pedestrians to window shop and travel down the street. Restaurants are also encouraged to use retractable storefronts in order to adjust to weather conditions.
- N. Awnings and Canopies: Awnings and canopies should be encouraged to allow for shade and protection of pedestrians. This is particularly important on street corners where pedestrians may want to wait under shelter while

waiting to cross the street. In addition, corner awnings psychologically shorten the distance that the pedestrian has to travel to cross the street. Awnings and canopies should also reinforce the architectural lines of the building.

- O. Mixed-Use Buildings: Buildings that are at least two stories tall should allow for a mixture of uses including, as permitted by the primary zoning, commercial retail and service, offices, light clean manufacturing, or residential. The first floor along primary shopping streets should be designed for commercial retail and service. Mixed-use development allows for a more 24-hour environment to emerge.
- P. Sidewalk Dining: Sidewalk dining, with table lighting and background music, should be encouraged to help build a livelier street environment.
- Q. Drive-Through Businesses: Drive-through businesses should not have openings on primary shopping streets. Drive-through lanes should empty their patrons onto side streets that are less retail oriented to allow motorists to enter and exit the property at controlled intersections.

PRINCIPLE IX. BUILDING DEMOLITIONS:

Building Demolitions should require MDC approval. Demolition of historically significant structures should be avoided. Demolition of architecturally significant structures also should be avoided.

A survey of structures should be undertaken to:

- Update the Regional Center portion of the July, 1991 *Center Township, Marion County, Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory* (Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources/Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology); and
- Identify architecturally significant structures in the Regional Center.

PRINCIPLE X. GUIDELINES FOR REPAIRS:

- A. Repairs and updates of buildings are expected and encouraged. Buildings that were built more than 50 years ago are to be considered “historic” in character and repairs and alterations are to be sympathetic to the original materials. This is not to say that original materials are required to be used in repairs, but similar size, shape, and finish where feasible are preferred. For example, if a glazed tile roof requires replacement, it is acceptable to replace it with a similarly colored asphalt shingle or metal roof, although repair of the roof with the existing tiles is preferred. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation is to be deemed acceptable when being used by the applicant. They are, however, not required to be followed in order to meet this guideline.
- B. Additions to existing buildings of a “historic character” are to be sympathetic to the existing primary structure.
- C. Repairs and updates of buildings that were built less than 50 years ago are to follow the guidelines outlined for new construction.