



## **PLANNING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**November 12, 2025**

**5:00 PM**

**Sedro-Woolley Municipal Building**

**Council Chambers**

**325 Metcalf Street**

- a. Call to Order**
- b. Roll Call**
- c. Unfinished Business**
  - 1. Mural, Signs, and Design Standards
- d. New Business**
- e. Adjournment**

### **Next Meeting(s) Planning and Business Development Committee -**

The City of Sedro-Woolley complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, age, disability, or sex. The City of Sedro-Woolley doesn't exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, age, disability, or sex.

The City of Sedro-Woolley also complies with applicable state laws and doesn't discriminate on the basis of creed, gender, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.



**Planning and Business Development Committee  
Agenda Item**

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**Agenda Item No.:** c.1.

**Date:** November 12, 2025

**From:** Ashton Sandoval Oaks, Assistant Planner

**Subject:** Mural, Signs, and Design Standards

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

1. Review proposed options, request feedback, and make edits as needed.
2. Direct staff with pursuing a preferred option.
3. With permission from the Planning & Business Development Committee, Planning staff requests this to be passed on to the Planning Commission.

**BACKGROUND/SUMMARY INFORMATION:**

Staff have prepared three possible options for a code update regarding murals, signs, and design standards, along with a preferred option.

**Option 1**

Repeal Chapter 17.51 - Murals, and process all murals as a facade sign. A minor code update to the signs code would be required to ensure murals are possible under the sign code. This is the least complex option and is a minimal code change. However, this option places no restrictions on location, size, durability, or other restriction on murals in Sedro-Woolley, excluding what is already required for facade signs.

**Option 2**

Update Chapter 17.51 - Murals to remove content-based restrictions to align with the First Amendment of the US Constitution, *Reed v Gilbert* (2015), and supplemental case law that protects the right to free speech. This includes written content on signs and other communicative devices visible to the public. This option would remove content-based restrictions from the signs and murals code, unless the restriction can pass strict judicial scrutiny. This level of scrutiny can only be passed if the regulation is narrowly tailored towards a specific, compelling governmental interest. Strict judicial scrutiny is implemented when a law infringes on a fundamental right, in the case the Right to Free Speech. A restriction prohibiting certain words or depictions from being displayed on signs is an example of a regulation that must pass strict judicial scrutiny to be considered constitutional. An example of this type of restriction that passes strict judicial scrutiny is a prohibition of signs that display vulgarities, obscenities, or illegal content, because this regulation is the most direct and least intrusive way to achieve the final goal of maintaining peace and quiet in a neighborhood.

### **Option 3**

Update the Design Standards and Guidelines of the Central Business District. Staff would meet with downtown business owners at their local stores to seek their opinions on what does and does not work as required design standards in the CBD. Questions would be short and direct, to maximize feedback from store owners without taking them away from their normal daily activities (est. 5-10 minutes, each). Additionally, staff would set up meetings with local developers to discuss the feedback provided from business owners and feasibility of these proposed new requirements. Engaging with both business owners and developers is critical when updating design standards, as it allows the community to take ownership in their policies, addresses challenges of implementation by meeting with developers and owners early, and identifies areas of improvement in the code or design standards that may have been overlooked by City staff or elected officials.

This option would also likely separate the requirements for new construction from remodels of existing buildings. Currently, design standards are required for all structures in the CBD that require a permit for development, regardless of the extent redevelopment is proposed. For property owners looking to accomplish a minor internal remodel or to add a simple awning to their building, compliance with "reduced" requirements for existing buildings may cause the property owner to spend more money on their own creative ideas and invest in their business, as opposed to using the funds to get their building into compliance with the downtown's established aesthetics.

An update to the murals and signs code would also co-incide with this revision. Enforceable standards for sign and mural dimensions, permit submittal, review authority, and similar aspects would be revised and located in the municipal code, while recommended guidelines and aesthetic requirements would be found in the design standards and guidelines. This is similar to how the development regulations are currently formatted.

### **Design Standards vs. Design Guidelines - Quick Refresher**

When considering options for murals, signs, and design standards, City staff wanted to emphasize the difference between a design standard and a design guideline. While both are located in the same document, *standards* are mandatory requirements and *guidelines* are optional recommendations. The intent of the design guidelines is to provide direction to developers who want to go "above & beyond" the minimum requirements for development. Several project applicants have implemented the guidelines in their projects, either to supplement the required design standards or to act as an alternative to a required design standard for an unusual situation. When considering whether a requirement should be a standard or a guideline, please take this into consideration. Is this regulation you would like to see on only some buildings? Or is this a regulation that should be required on all buildings in a certain zone?

### **FISCAL IMPACT, IF APPROPRIATE:**

None anticipated.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft Amendments 3 (10-31-25)
2. Draft Design Standards Amendment 2 (10-30-25)

## **Option 2: Update Murals & Signs Code Only**

### **Chapter 2.90 CONSOLIDATED PLANNING PROCEDURES\***

Sections:

- [2.90.010 Purpose and intent.](#)
- [2.90.020 Applicability.](#)
- [2.90.030 Effect of permit.](#)
- [2.90.035 Permit processes classified by type.](#)
- [2.90.040 Exemptions from state process requirements.](#)
- [2.90.050 Submittal requirements—General.](#)
- [2.90.060 Authority and responsibilities.](#)
- [2.90.070 Permit classification.](#)
- [2.90.073 Planned action review process.](#)
- [2.90.075 Public notice requirements.](#)
- [2.90.080 Application and decision—General.](#)
- [2.90.090 Appeals.](#)
- [2.90.100 Submittal requirements—Specific to application type.](#)

\* Prior ordinance history: Ords. 1449-03, 1485-04, 1491-04, 1602-08 and 1607-08.

[...]

#### **2.90.040 Exemptions from state process requirements.**

[...]

D. Exemptions from State Notification and Procedural Requirements for Permit Applications Not Subject to Environmental Review. RCW [36.70B.140](#) allows local governments to exclude certain approvals and building and engineering permits from the public notification and procedural requirements of the statute if they are categorically exempt from environmental review or if environmental review has already been completed at an earlier stage. However, the city's one-hundred-twenty-day maximum processing time would still apply. Therefore, the city exempts the following actions from the public notification and procedural requirements since they are typically processed very quickly and would be considerably delayed by imposition of a public comment period(s):

1. Building and grading permits (SEPA exempt);
2. Business licenses for home occupations;

3. Fire installation/construction permits;
4. Mechanical, plumbing, sign, mural, and fence permits;
5. Lot line adjustments;
6. Final plats;
7. Minor amendments to a previously approved PUD;
8. Occupancy permits;
9. Shoreline exemptions;
10. Temporary use permits (SEPA exempt), but not exempting sign requirements;
11. Water, sewer, storm drainage, roadway permits (SEPA exempt);
12. Other SEPA exempt actions/activities as outlined in WAC [197-11-800](#). (Ord. [1627-08](#) § 1 (App. A)(part), 2008)

## **2.90.050 Submittal requirements—General.**

*No changes.*

## **2.90.060 Authority and responsibilities.**

[...]

### C. Planning Director or Designee.

1. Authority. The planning director or designee shall review and act on the following:
  - a. Building and grading permits;
  - b. Binding site plan approval for commercial or industrial developments;
  - c. Environmental review.
    - i. Make threshold determinations for environmental checklists;
    - ii. Authorize circulation of draft environmental impact statements;

- iii. Approve and issue final environmental impact statements;
- iv. Approve mitigation conditions for mitigated determinations of nonsignificance and final environmental impact statements;
- d. Final plats;
- e. Interpretation of flood insurance rate map boundaries;
- f. Boundary line adjustments (B.L.A.);
- g. Modifications.
  - i. Minor modifications to previously approved site plan;
  - ii. Modifications of street standards;
  - iii. Minor modifications of landscaping requirements;
  - iv. Minor amendment to PRD;
- h. Planned action determinations;
- i. Review of business licenses for home occupations;
- j. Shoreline exemptions;
- k. Shoreline permits;
- l. Short plats – nine or less;
- m. Temporary use permits;
- n. Variances – administrative;
- o. Zoning waivers;
- p. Modifications of the number of required parking stalls and the requirements of the parking, loading and driveway regulations;
- q. Temporary homeless encampment permits;
- r. Design review;

s. Sign permits;

t. Mural permits.

[...]

## 2.90.070 Permit classification.

[...]

G. Land Use Permit Procedures.

1. Permit Classification Table.

Table 2.90.070(G)(1)—Permit Classification Table

Land Use Permit/Action	Permit Type					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Accessory Dwelling Unit	X					
Administrative Determination	X					
Binding Site Plan		X				
Boundary Line Adjustment	X					
Building Permit SEPA Exempt	X					
Code Interpretation	X					
Comprehensive Plan Map (and Rezone) or Text Amendments						X
Conditional Use Permit			X			
Design Review with Building Permit	X					
Design Review with Hearing Examiner Land Use Permit			X			
Development Agreement						X
Development Regulation Text Amendments Referred to Planning Commission						X
Development Regulation Text Amendments						X
Environmental Review		X				
Fence or Wall Permit	X					
Fill and Grade Permit	X					
Floodplain District Development Permit or Variance			X			

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Table 2.90.070(G)(1)—Permit Classification Table

Land Use Permit/Action	Permit Type					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Home Occupation	X					
Landscape Modifications	X					
Major Modification PRD			X			
Master Plan Approval			X			
Minor Modifications	X					
<u>Mural Permit</u>	<del>X</del>					
Nonconforming Use—Ordinary Maintenance or Repair	X					
Nonconforming Use—Certificate of Use or Occupancy	X					
Nonconforming Use—Special Permission to Enlarge, Expand, or Reconstruct			X			
Planned Action Determination		X				
Planned Action Ordinance						X
Planned Residential Development			X			
Plat, Preliminary			X			
Plat, Final	X					
Rezones Consistent with Comprehensive Plan						X
Shoreline Conditional Use Permit			X			
Shoreline Exemption	X					
Shoreline Substantial Development Permit		X				
Shoreline Variance			X			
Short Plat		X				
Short Plat—When Hearing Requested			X			
<u>Sign Permit</u>	<del>X</del>					
Site Plan Approval	X					
Special Use Permit			X			
Street Design Modifications	X					
Street Vacations				X		
Temporary Homeless Encampments		X				
Temporary Use Permit		X				

Table 2.90.070(G)(1)—Permit Classification Table

Land Use Permit/Action	Permit Type					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Variances			X			
Zoning Waivers	X					

[...]

## 2.90.100 Submittal requirements—Specific to application type.

The following tables list the submittal requirements for each type of permit application or land use approval which must accompany the required application fees as specified in the city's fee schedule.

A. Table 2.90.100(A)—Building and Public Works Submittal Requirements.

*Add the following to Table 2.90.100 (A):*

*- Create a column for "Mural Permit" with the following submittal requirements:*

*- Application Form (1 copy)*

*- Portfolio of Artist (1 copy)*

*- Scaled Rendering of Mural (2 copies)*

B. Table 2.90.100(B)—Land Use Permit Submittal Requirements.

C. Definitions of Terms Used in Submittal Requirements for Building, Planning and Public Works Permit Applications.

[...]

"Application form, building" means the planning department form required for the type of work to be performed (e.g., grading permit application for grading work, sign permit application for installation of a sign, etc.). Information requested includes the following:

- a. Skagit tax assessor's number for the property;
- b. Legal description of property;
- c. Street address, if applicable;
- d. Property owner's name, address and phone number;
- e. Prime contractor's business name, address, phone number, current state contractor registration number; and
- f. Either the name, address and phone number of the lender administering the interim construction financing, if any, or the name and address of the firm that has

issued a payment bond, if any, on behalf of the prime contractor for the protection of the owner, if the bond is for an amount fifty percent or more than the total construction project.

[...]

“Portfolio of artist” means a compilation of at least three artistic compositions completed by a single individual or association that is representative of the individual’s or association’s skill, artistic style, preferences, and other distinguishable elements of art. The art contained in the portfolio of artist must be completed by the same individual or association who applies for and intends to create the mural.

[...]

“Scaled rendering of mural” means an image which accurately represents the intended mural and dimensions of the art therein, provided in a size not less than eight and one-half inches by eleven inches.

[...]

# Chapter 17.04

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Sections:

[17.04.010 Purpose.](#)

[17.04.020 Jurisdiction.](#)

[17.04.030 Definitions.](#)

[17.04.040 Administration and interpretation.](#)

[17.04.050 Nonconforming uses, structures, and lots.](#)

[17.04.060 Fees.](#)

[...]

### 17.04.030 Definitions.

[...]

“Multiuse stormwater facility” means a facility that incorporates underground infiltration or otherwise contains no standing water for a period of at least nine months per year, has side slopes of no steeper than 4:1, and is used as common open space or as play areas defined in Chapter [17.38](#), as approved by the city engineer.

“Mural” means a painting, mosaic, fresco, or other artwork applied directly to the exterior of a structure. Murals may include text or other informational elements, but primarily serve an artistic or expressive purpose.

“Net density” means the number of dwelling units located on buildable land; which excludes public rights-of-way, private access easements, driveways, or tracts, utility corridors, stormwater facilities, critical areas and their buffers, and other areas which are unbuildable. Seventy-five percent of multiuse stormwater facilities may be counted towards total buildable area.

[...]

# Chapter 17.40

## SIGNS\*

Sections:

[17.40.010 General provisions.](#)

[17.40.020 Permanent on-premises signs.](#)

[17.40.025 Permanent off-premises directional signs.](#)

[17.40.030 Temporary signs.](#)

[17.40.035 Portable signs.](#)

[17.40.040 Sign permit requirements.](#)

[17.40.045 Digital signs.](#)

[17.40.050 Murals.](#)

\* Prior ordinance history: Ords. 1013, 1312-98, 1451-03, 1484-04 and 1522-05.

### 17.40.010 General provisions.

The intent of the sign regulations is to provide businesses and organizations an opportunity to advertise while minimizing sign clutter along the city's roadways. Signs along the two state highways shall be designed in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines for state scenic highways, either existing or as subsequently developed.

A. No sign shall be erected or employed that:

1. Impairs scenic views or the appearance of the surrounding area;
2. Creates traffic hazards by blocking vision or causing excessive diversion of attention;
3. Is structurally incapable of withstanding stresses to which it is likely to be subjected;
4. Contains flashing or uncomfortably intense light;
5. Is designed to attract attention through mechanical or wind-generated movement;
6. Is employed without consent of the property owner;
7. Is a festoon, banner, or pennant type sign; or
8. Digital signs, except as provided in Section [17.40.045](#).

B. Obsolete signs must be removed within ninety days of the change in business or offering. An "obsolete sign" is defined as any sign that advertises a business, product, or service that is

no longer available or, for on-premises signs, no longer located on the same site on which the sign is posted.

C. Size of signs includes the surface area, spaces and voids within a perimeter that connects the outermost points of the signs' lettering or devices, measured on the plane(s) to which the sign is oriented. Both sides of double-faced signs, such as projecting, freestanding or sandwich board signs with information on both sides, shall be counted. Frames or supports containing information or constituting integral design elements shall also be included.

D. Except in residential areas, where only external illumination is allowed, signage may be either externally illuminated or have only letters internally illuminated. All lighting shall be directed so as not to shine onto adjacent residential properties or into the night sky.

E. Each sign shall be maintained in good visual and structural condition at all times including color integrity and all parts and supports associated with the sign in accordance with its original approval by the city. Any repair to a sign shall be done using materials and design that are of equal or greater quality than the original sign.

F. Exceptions. The following shall not be regulated by this chapter:

1. Signage at public athletic fields;
2. Any vehicle or trailer that is road-ready, currently licensed and complies with all other ordinances and laws.

G. All signs regulated by this Chapter shall comply with the most recent edition of the Sedro-Woolley Design Standards and Guidelines.

H. Issued sign permits shall expire three months after the permit issuance date. Parties seeking to extend a sign permit may request a one-time three-month extension, provided there are extenuating circumstances preventing the development of the permitted sign. The Community Development Director or their designee shall have the authority to extend an un-expired sign permit. Expired sign permits shall not be renewed, withdrawn, or pass a final inspection. (Ord. [1982-21](#) § 1 (Exh. 1), 2021; Ord. [1577-07](#) § 1 (part), 2007)

## **17.40.020 Permanent on-premises signs.**

A. In the residential zones, signs shall be limited to a total combined size of five square feet or one percent of the gross floor area of buildings, whichever is greater.

B. In all other zones, the following limitations apply:

1. All freestanding signs shall be ground-oriented. Each sign's area may not exceed two percent of the gross floor area of the buildings nor two hundred square feet total surface

area, whichever is less, but in no case must signs be less than thirty-two square feet per side. Though uses or business may overlap spatially, gross floor area shall not be claimed more than once in computing allowable size of signs. See also SWMC Section [17.40.010\(D\)](#).

2. Facade signs must meet the size requirements listed below.

**Maximum Sign Area**

<b>Facade Area</b>	<b>Maximum Sign Area</b>
0—499	50 sq. ft. maximum
500—999	10% or 75 sq. ft. maximum, whichever is less
1,000—1,499	9% or 100 sq. ft. maximum, whichever is less
1,500—2,999	8% or 150 sq. ft. maximum, whichever is less
3,000 or greater	6% or 200 sq. ft. maximum, whichever is less

**Maximum Letter Size for Primary Signs**

<b>Distance from Primary Street</b>	<b>Maximum Letter Size</b>
Up to 10 ft.	12 inches
10—25	18 inches
25—50	24 inches
50—100	36 inches
Over 100	48 inches

3. Freestanding signs may not exceed twenty feet in height as measured from the centerline of the adjoining road to the top of the sign structure.

C. Freestanding signs shall meet the clear vision triangle requirements in ~~the city code~~[17.44.020 SWMC](#).

D. Each building may have one freestanding sign per frontage on a public right-of-way. Each business may have one facade sign per frontage on a public right-of-way. (Ord. [1577-07](#) § 1 (part), 2007)

## 17.40.025 Permanent off-premises directional signs.

The intent of this provision is to provide directional and location information to the general public about places of general interest, such as tourist information services, school or public recreational facilities, central business district or other special districts, historic sites, and regional developments; or, to provide information of a general community nature, such as those found at city entrance locations identifying the city and historic dates, or listing local service clubs and organizations or to provide business identification for sites located on a dead-end street. Such signs may be allowed, subject to the following:

- A. Any such sign which is visible from a state highway shall be subject to approval by the Department of Transportation;
- B. Approval of the owner of the property on which the sign is to be placed;
- C. Location. Any such sign shall not be placed where it may cause a hazard, or obstruct the vision of any driver;
- D. ~~Size shall be no larger than necessary to clearly inform or direct the public. City identification/community service club type Permanent off-premises directional~~ signs shall not exceed fifty square feet per side. ~~Business identification directional s~~Signs on dead-end streets shall meet the following criteria: all units will have letters six inches in height, light color on a dark background, not longer than four feet per unit and meeting corner visibility requirements; details to be approved by the ~~planning community development~~ director for each installation. (Ord. [1577-07](#) § 1 (part), 2007)

## 17.40.030 Temporary signs.

*No changes*

## 17.40.035 Portable signs.

*No changes*

## 17.40.040 Sign permit requirements.

*No changes*

## 17.40.045 Digital signs.

The intent of this provision is to allow for a limited number of digital signage in a manner that is safe, does not produce excessive light and does not create a distraction. These regulations

apply to digital signs, which include message boards, message displays, electronic reader boards, LED signs, video displays and similar programmable technologies.

A. Digital Sign Location Restrictions.

1. Digital signs are not permitted in any residential zones.
2. Digital signs are not permitted in the central business district except:
  - a. On Eastern Street between the railroad to the north and State Street to the south;
  - b. On Murdock Street between the railroad to the north and State Street to the south;
  - c. On Puget Street between Pacific Street to the north and State Street to the south;
  - d. On State Street; and
  - e. On Ferry Street between State Route 20 to the west and Eastern Street to the east.
  - f. On Metcalf Street between Moore Street to the north and Northern Street to the south.

B. Display Standards in Mixed Commercial and Industrial Zone.

1. All digital signs shall come equipped with an automatic dimming photocell device which will automatically adjust the display's brightness based on preset levels relative to ambient light conditions. All digital signs shall operate at brightness levels of no more than three-tenths of one foot-candle above ambient light levels with a maximum of five thousand nits during daylight hours and five hundred nits at night. Certification of these limits shall be provided by the developer prior to sign permit issuance;
2. Measurement of brightness (nits) shall be measured from the sign's face at its maximum brightness;
3. Audio speakers are prohibited in association with a digital sign;
4. Digital signs must be directed away from adjacent residentially zoned or open space zoned properties including properties across a public right-of-way. No digital sign may be located closer than one hundred feet from residentially zoned or open space zoned properties as measured from the sign location to the nearest property line of the residential or open space zoned property;

5. Static messages shall have a minimum of five seconds of dwell time for all static images. Displays which scroll onto the signboard must hold for a minimum of five seconds including scrolling. Flashing, strobing, video imaging and scrolling messages faster than described above are prohibited. Changes between static messages and images must be one second or less and fading or dissolving is not permitted;
6. No more than one digital sign is allowed per property. A digital sign may be double-sided; and
7. A digital sign shall be integrated into a standard sign surface area; digital signs are not permitted independent of a standard sign. Up to fifty percent of the sign surface area may be used for digital sign purposes. The digital sign shall count towards the allowed sign surface area as calculated in Section [17.40.020](#).

C. Display Standards in CBD and Public Zone.

1. All digital signs shall come equipped with an automatic dimming photocell device which will automatically adjust the display's brightness based on preset levels relative to ambient light conditions. All electronic digital signs shall operate at brightness levels of no more than three-tenths of one foot-candle above ambient light levels with a maximum of five thousand nits during daylight hours and five hundred nits at night. Certification of these limits shall be provided by the developer prior to building permit issuance;
2. Digital signs may be used after dusk only until eleven p.m. or, if the advertising is an on-premises message about an event at the site where the sign is located, for up to one hour after said event;
3. Measurement of brightness (nits) shall be measured from the sign's face at its maximum brightness;
4. Audio speakers are prohibited in association with a digital sign;
5. Digital signs must be directed away from adjacent residentially zoned or open space zoned properties including properties across a public right-of-way. No digital sign may be located closer than one hundred feet from residentially zoned or open space zoned properties as measured from the sign location to the nearest property line of the residential or open space zoned property;
6. ~~Digital signs in the CBD and public zones may only contain message board capabilities – only text shall be permitted, not images or other nontext display.~~ The display shall be limited to one color for the text displayed and a darkened (absence of light) background. Messages shall have a minimum of seven seconds of dwell time for all text. Flashing, animation, movement, video imaging and scrolling messages are prohibited. Changes in

messages and images must be one second or less and scrolling, fading or dissolving is not permitted;

7. No more than one digital sign is allowed per property. The single digital sign may be double-sided; and

8. A digital sign shall be integrated into a standard sign surface area; digital signs are not permitted independent of a standard sign. Up to fifty percent of the sign surface area may be used for digital sign purposes. The digital sign shall count towards the allowed sign surface area as calculated in Section [17.40.020](#); and.

~~9.—Digital signs may be used only to advertise activities or goods or services available on the property on which the sign is located, or to present public service information.  
(Ord. [1982-21](#) § 1 (Exh. 1), 2021)~~

## ~~Chapter 17.51~~

### ~~MURALS~~

Sections:

~~[17.51.010](#) — [Project description—History.](#)~~

~~[17.51.020](#) — [Purpose.](#)~~

~~[17.51.030](#) — [Application requirements.](#)~~

~~[17.51.040](#) — [Procedures.](#)~~

~~[17.51.050](#) — [Standards.](#)~~

#### ~~[17.51.010](#) Project description—History.~~

#### ~~[17.40.050](#) Murals~~

~~A.—The works of one of the city’s most famous citizens—photographer Darius Kinsey—was the original inspiration for the Sedro-Woolley mural project. The first few murals painted on the exterior walls of buildings were replicas of actual photos taken by Darius Kinsey. The original photos are typically printed in sepia-tone colors or black and white. It was found that using the subtle sepia colors in the replicas resulted in very lifelike pictures that are eye-catching from a distance and intriguing to study at close range. Soon other merchants in the city became enthused about the murals and desired murals on their buildings. Thus a project was born.~~

~~B.A. History. The guidelines adopted within this chapter section were developed in cooperation with the city design review committee, planning commission, [planning and business development committee](#), and interested citizens, and are intended to provide a framework to insure ensure an aesthetically pleasing and cohesive project that will be a source of community pride for years to come. The inspiration behind this code was to encourage lifelike and intriguing pictures that draw in viewers and motivate the creation of additional~~

murals. Early murals consisted of photographs taken by Darius Kinsey between 1890 – 1930, but expanded to other subject matters that held deep ties to the community, such as the natural environment and historical events after 1930. This requires that minimum standards addressing basic issues, such as size, colors, ~~content,~~ and advertising allowance, and professionalism be established. The intent of these regulations is to simultaneously preserve the historic atmosphere of Sedro-Woolley and encourage placemaking and “bottom-up” community engagement. ~~While these standards may exclude some proposed projects in favors of others, there is no intent to discriminate in favor or against any particular artist, or exclude authentic representations of historical events, people, or community life that are part of the history of Sedro-Woolley.~~

C. A number of building walls have been identified as possible mural locations. It is anticipated that the content of these murals will be derived from either Kinsey photos, or photos taken during the same era (1890-1930). When several murals are completed, a brochure of the project will be developed to include a map showing where the murals are located, an explanation of each mural, and additional information about the history of the area, the historic buildings in the city, and other points of interest. This brochure will be updated periodically as the project matures. It is intended that this brochure will be used as a promotional tool for the city. (Ord. 1072 § 2 (Exh. A § 3.11.01), 1989)

## **17.51.020 Purpose.**

### B. Purpose.

The “Pictures from the Past” mural project is undertaken as a joint effort by the citizens of Sedro-Woolley, the chamber of commerce, and the city’s planning commission and council, and is intended to serve the following purposes:

#### A.—

1. Acknowledge and celebrate the history of the city and the surrounding area in a visually appealing manner;

#### B.—

2. Provide support for the historic theme adopted for the downtown business area;

#### C.

3. Support local artists to express their history and relationship with Sedro-Woolley through their craft;

4. Provide information and enjoyment to visitors and residents of the community;

D.

5. Provide a sense of community identity through recognition of the diverse elements of community life, history, industry, and folk lore that contribute to the unique character of Sedro-Woolley and Skagit County;

E.

6. Encourage participation of various businesses and community members in a cohesive and tangible project that will have lasting value to the city; and

F.

7. Promote and encourage commercial activity and out-of-town visitor interest in the city as a tourist destination.

8. This chapter and this section are not intended to regulate or dictate, in any manner, the content of speech or expression, or the viewpoint of the speaker, and are only intended to protect neighborhood character through the regulation of color, material, size, and location of signs and murals. (Ord. 1072 § 2 (Exh. A § 3.11.02), 1989)

### **17.51.030 Application requirements.**

C. Application Requirements. An application for a wall mural shall include the following information:

A.

1. Name and address of the person or business paying for the mural;

B.

2. Name and address of the artist;

C.

3. Name and mailing address of the owner of the building to be painted;

4. Location of the proposed mural, including address of building, ~~and~~ the location and size of the wall of the building ~~to be painted;~~, and the material composition of the wall of the building to be painted;

D.— Photo to be replicated, and date and location of photo, or rendering of the proposed mural adequate to accurately depict the content of the mural. If a rendering is provided, historical documentation of the authenticity of the scene shall be required.

5. Scaled rendering of the proposed mural;

a. A photo or color illustration of proposed mural.

b. Image shall be scaled.

c. Description of materials that will be used to install the mural, including but not limited to paint materials, brush materials, and any equipment directly used to aid in the design and installation of the mural.

E.

6. Artist's portfolio of at least three similar works that accurately represent the skill, style, and technique of the mural artist. Works of art included in the artist's portfolio shall be no smaller than eight and one-half inches by eleven inches.

7. Written description of the proposal addressing the purpose and standards of this ordinance. (Ord. [1072](#) § 2 (Exh. A § 3.11.03), 1989)

## **17.51.040 Procedures.**

D. Procedures.

1. An application for a wall mural shall be reviewed per [Chapter 2.90 SWMC – Consolidated Planning Procedures](#), Chapter [15.44](#), [SWMC – Design Review](#), and incorporate the standards in this [chapterTitle](#). (Ord. [2032-22](#) § 15, 2023; Ord. [1072](#) § 2 (Exh. A § 3.11.04), 1989)

2. Murals shall be completed within three (3) months of approval of the mural permit. Murals not completed within this timeframe may seek a three (3) month permit extension at the discretion of the Community Development Director or their designee. Extensions shall only be granted if the permit applicant can demonstrate extenuating circumstances have delayed the project and are outside of the control of the applicant. Extensions may not be granted for expired, withdrawn, or denied mural permits.

## **17.51.050 Standards.**

E. Standards. A mural proposal shall be reviewed and approved or denied based on the following standards:

A.—Subject Matter—Photo Replicas. Murals shall be replicas of photographs taken between 1890 and 1930. A suggested source is the Darius Kinsey collection. The subject of murals should relate to one or more of the following themes:

- 1.—Logging industry in and around Sedro-Woolley;
- 2.—Railroad shipping or passenger operations in Skagit County;
- 3.—River shipping or passenger operations in Skagit County;
- 4.—Early community life of the city;
- 5.—Significant events which took place during the era;
- 6.—Other subject matter related to the era and Skagit County area, as approved by the planning commission;

B.—Subject Matter Alternative. As an alternative to replicating a photo, the following is also acceptable:

- 1.—Recreation of an authentic historic event using available documents and written accounts as sources. Such events should be those which occurred between 1890 and 1930.
- 2.—A collage of pictures following a theme, such as the evolution of logging methods, or illustrating the fashions of the era, or other similar themes associated with the history of the area.
- 3.—Mural maps of the city, or of early railroad and/or logging operations, or similar geographical information.

C.—Subject Matter—Unacceptable. To protect the integrity of the project, the general welfare of the city and citizens therein, the following may not be considered acceptable subject matter for a mural:

- 1.—Pictures not related to the 1890-1930 era;
- 2.—Pictures not related to the city or county area;
- 3.—Pictures depicting completely fictional events with no documentation of authenticity;
- 4.—Pictures depicting recognizable people from the past out of true context. (This does not exclude depicting people from the present in pictures of the era, if done with the consent of the person represented.)

~~5.—Pictures or representations which violate any state law.~~

~~D.—Colors. Murals shall be painted in sepia-toned colors. This coloration is consistent with the color of photos taken during the era, and gives a realistic touch to the work. Sepia also works well with the brick surfaces and color tones of the city, provides a strong cohesive design element to the project as a whole, and creates an historical mood. Use of sepia colors will be less likely to create a cluttered or “billboard” effect, and will insure that the mural project does not detract from the historical character and theme of the downtown business district. Use of sepia tones will reduce the overall cost of maintaining the murals. Limiting the project to sepia tones also eliminates the difficulty of determining authenticity of colors and eliminates a potential subjective decision that must be made by the review committee and planning commission.~~

~~E.—Color. Exceptions. The planning commission may grant exceptions allowing the use of other colors under the following circumstances:~~

~~1.—Paint samples of the true colors to be used are provided with the application, plus supporting evidence that the proposed colors are authentic and/or appropriate for the subject matter. Preference will be given to colors which are subtle in tone;~~

~~1. Pictures or representations which violate any state law, depict obscenities, depict fighting words, or disturb the peace and quiet of the community shall be denied;~~

~~2. The use of colors will not detract from any historic structure, or group of structures, as defined by any historic landmark, site, or structure designation; and~~

~~3. Within the Central Business District Core, as defined by Section 17.04.030 SWMC, neon and fluorescent colors shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total square footage of the mural.~~

~~3.—Either:~~

~~a.—The mural is to be located outside of the central business district; or,~~

~~b.—Only a portion of the mural is to be painted in other colors, as an accent against the sepia background, to highlight some element of the picture for advertising or other purposes, subject to the requirements of subsection G of this section below; or~~

~~c.—The mural is to be placed on a nonhistoric building as a major design feature.~~

~~F.—~~

4. Scale. The photo or rendering shall be reproduced at a scale large enough to cover the wall on which it is to be placed. As much as possible, larger than life-size scale should be attained.

G.—

5. Size.

a. No part of a mural shall exceed the height of the structure to which it is tiled, painted, or affixed.

b. No part of a mural shall extend past the pane of the wall upon which it is tiled, painted, or affixed.

c. Square footage of the mural shall not exceed eighty percent (80%) of the square footage of the building façade.

6. Composition.

a. No mural shall consist of or contain electrical or mechanical components or changing images, including but not limited to moving structural elements, flashing or sequential lights, or other automated methods that result in movement, the appearance of movement, or changing of mural content;

b. No mural shall be painted on a wall or surface comprised of a material deemed by city staff to be damaged by or otherwise structurally inappropriate for painting;

c. No mural shall be painted using materials deemed by city staff to be inappropriate for the proposed wall or surface.

7. Acknowledgements—Advertising. Commercial murals. All murals shall be signed by the artist. In addition, up to ~~one~~ five percent (5%) of ~~the a commercial~~ mural area may be used to acknowledge the person, organization, or business commissioning the mural. If a specific business identification for the business occupying the building is incorporated into the mural, the portion of the mural dedicated to such identification shall be applied toward the maximum square footage allowance for signs for that business under this Chapter chapter 17.40.

H.—Credentials. The design review committee may request a portfolio and other credentials of the artist to insure that all murals will be of a professional quality. (Ord. 1072 § 2 (Exh. A § 2 (Exh. A § 3.11.05), 1989))

# Option 3 Design Standards & Guidelines

## City of Sedro-Woolley Design Standards and Guidelines

Original Adoption date: October 13, 2004

Updated ~~October, 2022~~ November, 2025





### 3. Additional Standards for the Central Business District

#### BUILDING DESIGN

#### GENERAL STOREFRONT PROFILE



#### ***Intent:***

To encourage and implement architectural design that is varied, aesthetically pleasing, functional and fits within local and regional vernacular, encouraging building that matches regional historic themes; to avoid large blank homogenous spaces, overbearing and out of scale forms and materials. The standards and guidelines that follow in this section are written with the intention that all street-facing facades of the first story of buildings within the downtown core have the appearance of, and be recognizable as, a commercial storefront. These standards work from and in addition to the existing Sedro-Woolley Design

Standards and Guidelines. The [Planning-Community Development](#) Director may make minor modifications and interpretations to design standards on a case-by-case basis.

Generally speaking, a style known as “Art Nouveau” emerged in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries. It was the dominant influence in painting, sculpture, architecture and what is known as “the applied” or “decorative arts”. This new style was characterized by lack of straight lines and an emphasis on fluid movement within compositions. Architecturally, it can be seen most prominently in cornices, crown moldings, arched windows, belt courses, medallions, letter styles and sign shapes. Utilitarian construction of earlier years was replaced with an emphasis on craftsmanship. This overall stylistic

evidence was most manifested in larger cities, (Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle are examples) but much of it filtered through to small towns like Sedro-Woolley. Remnants of beautiful crown moldings and dentil detailing are



Examples of remnant dentil detailing (left) and crown molding (right) in Sedro-Woolley’s CBD.

most of what remains of the original work. Efforts need to be made to uncover and restore as much as possible of what actually existed. In some cases, this original work will be readily apparent – in others it has been destroyed. In some more current buildings, it never existed at all. Each situation will have to be evaluated on its own and changes carefully considered not only for their own value, but for the influence they will have on surrounding properties.

Historically, storefront architecture in the Northwest ranged from simple, wooden false fronts to sophisticated masonry facades. In every town, there is a combination of styles and interpretations resulting in an interesting collection of stylistic variations. This variety – where wood front stood next to brick, two-story next to single-story and simple next to ornate – is particularly characteristic of this era. Any old photos of town scenes show this to be very apparent.

Building facades were consistently given ornamental detailing. Aside from signage, this most often found expression in building crowns, dentil work, cast masonry, ornamental brick and ornamental sheet metal. Some of these additions can vary so widely as to be difficult to define. Care should be taken to encourage the use of such elements while, at the same time, ensuring that they are well-integrated and not disproportionate or overdone.

Also immediately apparent from this period is the tall finishes on ground level façades. Tall windows and doors, carefully modulated and articulated with respect to adjacent architecture, work to create a focal point that compliments the building front as well as introduce much needed natural light into interiors. Transom windows above a bank of first-level windows were often seen. These have been largely covered in more recent years as ceilings have become lower over time. By uncovering these windows and



Examples of historic Art Nouveau style architecture in downtown Sedro-Woolley displaying tall, decorative fronts.

refitting them with glass, much can be added that speaks of early architecture (as an alternative, awnings can be used to cover transom window areas).

Special decorative attention at entries is a significant aspect of architecture seen in the Art Nouveau era. The “tall front” look is especially evident here. Tall ground level fronts were very common in early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. To some extent, they have survived to contemporary times, though there are substantial differences in their materials and presentation. The old facades started at ground level with a short 2’-3’ wainscoting of masonry on wood which is often divided and paneled. Above this wall is multi-paned glass frequently tall and narrow with vertical orientation. Recessed entries are the rule, with doors flanked by tall, narrow windows and a transom window at the top. Above the first bank of windows is a bank of shorter 3’-4’ transom windows. As mentioned earlier, these allowed the maximum amount of natural light into the corresponding tall interior spaces. The natural light was frequently controlled with a retractable type awning at the transom window level. Continuing up from the transom window level is the false front – typically ½ to ¾ the height of everything below that level. Alternatively, in a 2- or 3-story building are symmetrically arranged rows of double hung windows. In either false front or multi-story buildings, the top of the wall is finished with decorative rows of brick work, dentil detailing and a crown molding.



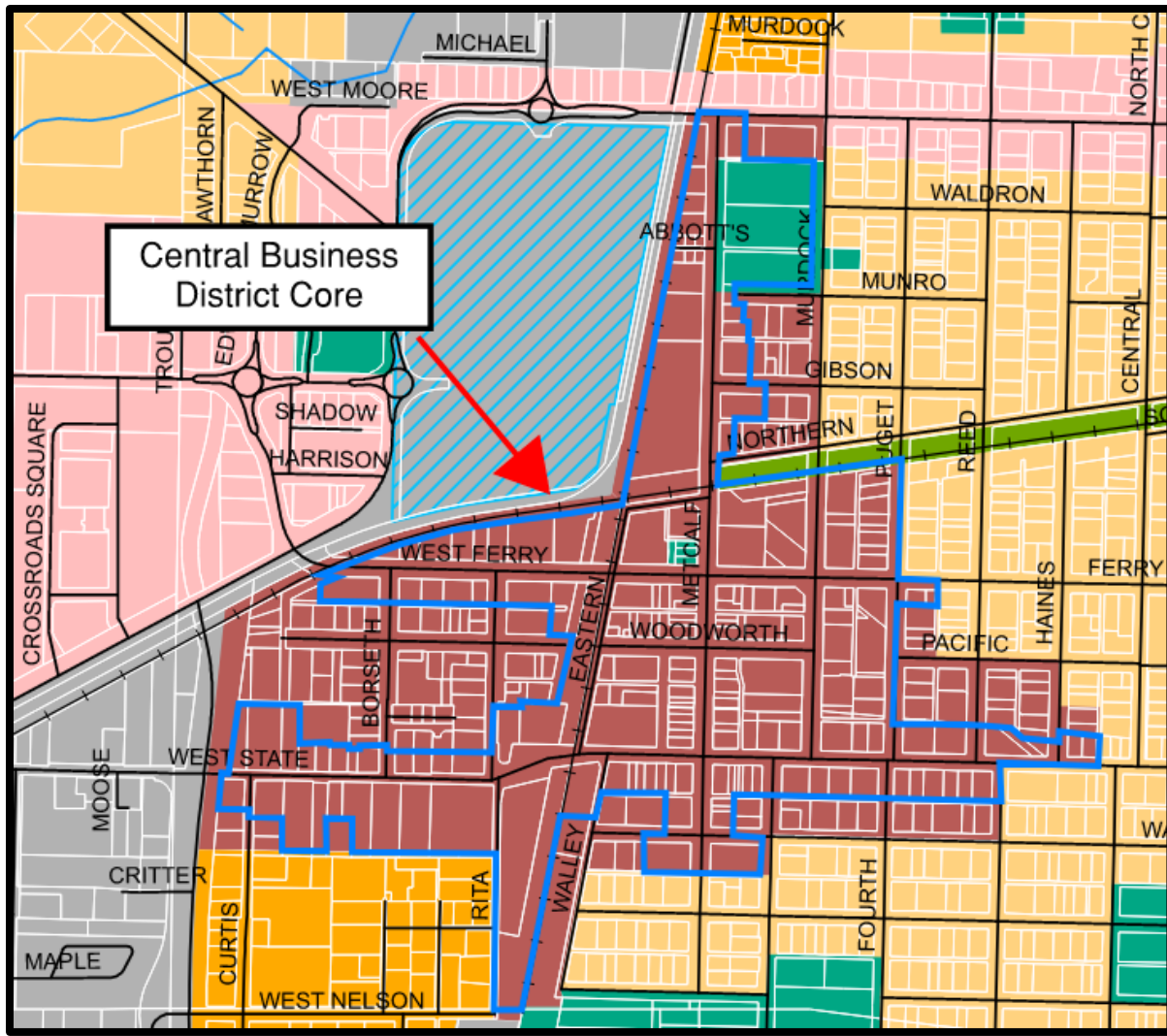
A false front disguises the rest of this single-story building, creating a more impressive, eye-catching façade.

“False fronts” are a historically characteristic way of giving a single-story building a more impressive façade. These fronts were most typically wood frame or masonry with decorative panels and detailing. They gave the illusion of a much larger building with a distinctive face without involving the whole building. Wood buildings normally had a gable roof with the characteristic triangular gable end. False fronts on this type of building would disguise the triangle with a rectangular façade. These accommodated sidewalk/window coverings and signage and integrated well with adjoining buildings. Masonry fronts were not typical of single-story buildings; however, some stores had extremely high interior spaces that extended above the transom windows and from the outside looked much taller than a one-story building. Some of these, after having ceilings lowered, have the appearance of a false front

building. Decorative detailing is also commonly apparent on buildings of this era. Intricate sheet metal work often topped building fronts with impressive crown molding. It was the exceptional building that did not have substantial superficial detailing.

### **Historic Downtown:**

The design standards and guidelines outlined in this chapter were developed with consideration for the historic core of the former Town of Woolley. To stimulate economic development and create a cohesive downtown theme in the historic core, additional standards and guidelines apply to development proposals located within the historic core as well as the main entryways to the Central Business District. Properties within the CBD shall be governed by the design standards and guidelines of either the CBD Core or the Outer CBD. These areas are defined in Chapter 11 of these standards. A map of the properties within the CBD Core dated June 2025 is provided below:



**NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITIONS:**

*(Applies when a proposal includes new construction, expands an existing structure's footprint by at least 10%, or increases an existing structure's height by at least eight feet)*

**Standards:**

Required:

**Central Business District Core**

1. Building façades shall be limited to one base color, one trim color, and one accent color.
  - a) Trim color shall not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the total area of each façade.
  - b) Accent color shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total area of each façade.
  - c) Fluorescent colors are strictly prohibited within the CBD Core.

2. Properties adjacent to a sidewalk or shared use path shall utilize brick as the dominant material of the street-facing façade of the structure. At least fifty percent (50%) of the street-facing façade of the first and second floors of structures adjacent to a sidewalk or shared use path shall utilize brick.
3. Blank spaces on walls adjacent to a sidewalk, shared use path, or publicly accessible street or driveway shall not exceed 20 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically.
4. Buildings shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR use parapets to entirely block alternative roof forms. Flat roofs shall include a parapet on all sides of the building, visible from the adjacent street(s), with cornice or similar architectural feature. Shed roofs are appropriate for subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.
  - a) Buildings taller than 30 feet OR are three stories or more that are along Metcalf, Ferry, West Ferry, State, and West State Streets shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets or may have shed roofs with a minimum of a three-foot eave on the street-facing side. Flat roofs shall include parapets on all sides of the building, visible from the adjacent street(s) and accompanied by a cornice or similar architectural feature. Shed roofs are appropriate for subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.
5. All one-story commercial buildings with no residential component shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR may have shed roofs with a minimum of a two-foot eave on the street-facing side.
6. Ground floor, street-facing facades of buildings shall incorporate at least five of the following elements listed in A-M, per façade:
  - A) Lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets;
  - B) Medallions;
  - C) Belt courses;
  - D) Plinths for columns;
  - E) Kickplates for storefront window or primary entrance;
  - F) Projecting sills;
  - G) Tilework;
  - H) Pedestrian scale sign(s), sign(s) painted on windows, or mural(s) that comply with the standards of this manual and Title 17 SWMC;
  - I) Planter box;
  - J) Awning, canopy, or marquee;
  - K) False front or tall front;
  - L) Streetscape lighting that complies with the standards of this manual and approved in writing by the Director of Public Works or their designee;
  - M) An element not listed here that meets the intent.

In addition, as part of requirements, applicants shall include one or more of the following elements listed in N-T:

  - N) Masonry skirting/base/wainscoting or similar, no less than 36” above grade at building; minimum height does not apply under fenestrations; finished concrete may be considered.
  - O) Large format doors and windows with transom windows above;
  - P) Large operable windows and/or doors that create dynamic, usable space/interface of public and private space for dining, seating, retail or similar;
  - Q) Post and lintel detailing/articulation; corbeling, dentils or similar;
  - R) Decorative trim, moldings, bands, arches, balustrades, base moldings or similar architectural features;
  - S) Notable building articulation and/or modulation vertically or horizontally or similar architectural feature(s) that meet the intent of this section.
  - T) An element not listed here that meets the intent

### Outer Central Business District

1. Blank spaces on walls adjacent to a sidewalk, shared use path, or publicly accessible street or driveway shall not exceed 20 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically.
2. Buildings of 30 feet or less or those with two stories or fewer, whichever is higher, may have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR shed roofs with a minimum of a two-foot eave on the street-facing side OR gabled or hipped roofs at 6:12 slope minimum with a minimum of a two-foot eave. Flat roofs shall include a parapet on all sides of the building, visible from the adjacent sidewalk(s), shared use path(s), and street(s), with a cornice or similar architectural feature. Shed roofs are appropriate for subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.
3. All one-story commercial buildings with no residential component shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR may have shed roofs with a minimum of a two-foot eave on the street-facing side.
4. Ground floor, street-facing facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall incorporate at least five of the following elements listed in A-M, per façade:
  - A) Lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets;
  - B) Medallions;
  - C) Belt courses;
  - D) Plinths for columns;
  - E) Kickplates for storefront window or primary entrance;
  - F) Projecting sills;
  - G) Tilework;
  - H) Pedestrian scale sign(s), sign(s) painted on windows, or mural(s) that comply with the standards of this manual and Title 17 SWMC;
  - I) Planter box;
  - J) Awning, canopy, or marquee;
  - K) False front or tall front;
  - L) Streetscape lighting that complies with the standards of this manual and approved in writing by the Director of Public Works or their designee;
  - M) An element not listed here that meets the intent.

In addition, as part of requirements, applicants shall include one or more of the following elements listed in N-T:

- N) Masonry skirting/base/wainscoting or similar, no less than 36" above grade at building; minimum height does not apply under fenestrations; finished concrete may be considered.
  - O) Large format doors and windows with transom windows above;
  - P) Large operable windows and/or doors that create dynamic, usable space/interface of public and private space for dining, seating, retail or similar;
  - Q) Post and lintel detailing/articulation; corbeling, dentils or similar;
  - R) Decorative trim, moldings, bands, arches, balustrades, base moldings or similar architectural features;
  - S) Notable building articulation and/or modulation vertically or horizontally or similar architectural feature(s) that meet the intent of this section.
  - T) An element not listed here that meets the intent
1. ~~Brick shall be the dominant material featured at the pedestrian level on street-facing facades. In multi-story buildings, 50% or more of the front façade on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors shall incorporate brick. If a step-back is included on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, the usage of brick may be reduced to no less than 30%. *This standard does not apply to buildings located within the Outer CBD area (defined in Chapter 11—Definitions).*~~
  2. ~~Frontages shall mimic the historic look of wood or masonry. Other materials may be used to achieve this look, however they must be of an acceptable quality.~~
  3. ~~Building fronts shall incorporate no more than three colors; one base color, one trim color and one accent color. Consult with city staff on appropriate façade colors.~~

4. ~~When present and intact, historic character and character-defining elements of the storefront shall be preserved.~~
5. ~~Blank spaces on walls shall not exceed 20 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically.~~
6. ~~New construction shall architecturally respect the modulation and articulation of adjacent buildings.~~
7. ~~Buildings in the Historic Downtown area (defined in Chapter 11—Definitions) shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR use parapets to entirely block alternative roof forms. Flat roofs shall include a parapet on all sides of the building, visible from the adjacent street(s), with a cornice or similar architectural feature. Shed roofs are appropriate for subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.~~
8. ~~Buildings over two stories or more than 30 feet maximum at peak, whichever is lower, along the Main Streets of the CBD (defined in Chapter 11—Definitions) shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR may have shed roofs with a minimum of a three-foot eave on the street-facing side. Flat roofs shall include a parapet on all sides of the building, visible from the adjacent street(s), with a cornice or similar architectural feature. Shed roofs are appropriate for subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.~~
9. ~~Buildings of two stories or less or those under 30 feet maximum at peak, whichever is higher, within the Outer CBD area (defined in Chapter 11—Definitions) may have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR shed roofs with a minimum of a two-foot eave on the street-facing side OR gabled or hipped roofs at 6:12 slope minimum with a minimum of a two-foot eave. Flat roofs shall include a parapet on all sides of the building, visible from the adjacent street(s), with a cornice or similar architectural feature. Shed roofs are appropriate for subordinate roof forms, such as porches, canopies, or upper floor projections.~~
10. ~~All one-story commercial buildings with no residential component shall have traditional commercial flat roofs with parapets OR may have shed roofs with a minimum of a two-foot eave on the street-facing side.~~
11. ~~Ground floor, street-facing facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall incorporate at least five of the following elements listed in A-J:~~
  - A) ~~Lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets;~~
  - B) ~~Medallions;~~
  - C) ~~Belt courses;~~
  - D) ~~Plinths for columns;~~
  - E) ~~Kickplates for storefront window;~~
  - F) ~~Projecting sills;~~
  - G) ~~Tilework;~~
  - H) ~~Pedestrian scale sign(s) or sign(s) painted on windows;~~
  - I) ~~Planter box;~~
  - J) ~~An element not listed here that meets the intent.~~

~~In addition, as part of requirements, applicants shall include one or more of the following elements listed in K-P:~~

- K) ~~Masonry skirting/base/wainscoting or similar, no less than 36" above grade at building; minimum height does not apply under fenestrations; finished concrete may be considered.~~
- L) ~~Large format doors and windows with transom windows above;~~
- M) ~~Large operable windows and/or doors that create dynamic, usable space/interface of public and private space for dining, seating, retail or similar;~~
- N) ~~Post and lintel detailing/articulation; corbeling, dentils or similar;~~
- O) ~~Decorative trim, moldings, bands, arches, balustrades, base moldings or similar architectural features;~~
- P) ~~Notable building articulation and/or modulation vertically or horizontally or similar architectural feature(s) that meet the intent of this section.~~

## **Guidelines:**

### *Encouraged:*

1. Intricate sheet metal should be used to enhance frontages and match the historic style.
2. Dentil detailing of cast masonry, brick or a combination of masonry, metal and wood.
- ~~3. "False fronts" or "tall fronts"~~
- 4.3. Provide for breaks in color between buildings. Painted surfaces and brick or masonry should have substantial color variation. Awning fabric is also available in a number of colors and patterns.
- 5.4. Building facades should vary in height, shape and ornamental detailing.
- 6.5. Glass shapes and sizes should change from one front to the next, including adjoining front doors and entries.
- 7.6. Signage colors, shapes, letter styles and details should vary.

## **REMODELS, REPAIRS, AND ALTERATIONS:**

**(Applies when a proposal requires design review from the City of Sedro-Woolley, but does not expand an existing structure's footprint by at least 10% or increase an existing structure's height by at least eight feet)**

## **Standards:**

### *Required:*

#### **Central Business District Core**

1. Building façades shall be limited to one base color, one trim color, and one accent color.
    - a) Trim color shall not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the total area of each façade.
    - b) Accent color shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total area of each façade.
      - c) Fluorescent colors are strictly prohibited within the CBD Core.
  2. Blank spaces on walls adjacent to a sidewalk, shared use path, or publicly accessible street or driveway shall not exceed 20 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically.
  3. Ground floor, street-facing facades of buildings shall incorporate at least five of the following elements listed in A-M, per façade:
    - A) Lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets;
    - B) Medallions;
    - C) Belt courses;
    - D) Plinths for columns;
    - E) Kickplates for storefront window or primary entrance;
    - F) Projecting sills;
    - G) Tilework;
    - H) Pedestrian scale sign(s), sign(s) painted on windows, or mural(s) that comply with the standards of this manual and Title 17 SWMC;
    - I) Planter box;
    - J) Awning, canopy, or marquee;
    - K) False front or tall front;
    - L) Streetscape lighting that complies with the standards of this manual and approved in writing by the Director of Public Works or their designee;
    - M) An element not listed here that meets the intent.
- In addition, as part of requirements, applicants shall include one or more of the following elements listed in N-T:
- N) Masonry skirting/base/wainscoting or similar, no less than 36" above grade at building; minimum height does not apply under fenestrations; finished concrete may be considered.

- O) Large format doors and windows with transom windows above;
- P) Large operable windows and/or doors that create dynamic, usable space/interface of public and private space for dining, seating, retail or similar;
- Q) Post and lintel detailing/articulation; corbeling, dentils or similar;
- R) Decorative trim, moldings, bands, arches, balustrades, base moldings or similar architectural features;
- S) Notable building articulation and/or modulation vertically or horizontally or similar architectural feature(s) that meet the intent of this section.
- T) An element not listed here that meets the intent

### Outer Central Business District

1. Blank spaces on walls adjacent to a sidewalk, shared use path, or publicly accessible street or driveway shall not exceed 20 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically.
2. Ground floor, street-facing facades of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall incorporate at least five of the following elements listed in A-M, per façade:
  - A) Lighting or hanging baskets supported by ornamental brackets;
  - B) Medallions;
  - C) Belt courses;
  - D) Plinths for columns;
  - E) Kickplates for storefront window or primary entrance;
  - F) Projecting sills;
  - G) Tilework;
  - H) Pedestrian scale sign(s), sign(s) painted on windows, or mural(s) that comply with the standards of this manual and Title 17 SWMC;
  - I) Planter box;
  - J) Awning, canopy, or marquee;
  - K) False front or tall front;
  - L) Streetscape lighting that complies with the standards of this manual and approved in writing by the Director of Public Works or their designee;
  - M) An element not listed here that meets the intent.

In addition, as part of requirements, applicants shall include one or more of the following elements listed in N-T:

- N) Masonry skirting/base/wainscoting or similar, no less than 36" above grade at building; minimum height does not apply under fenestrations; finished concrete may be considered.
- O) Large format doors and windows with transom windows above;
- P) Large operable windows and/or doors that create dynamic, usable space/interface of public and private space for dining, seating, retail or similar;
- Q) Post and lintel detailing/articulation; corbeling, dentils or similar;
- R) Decorative trim, moldings, bands, arches, balustrades, base moldings or similar architectural features;
- S) Notable building articulation and/or modulation vertically or horizontally or similar architectural feature(s) that meet the intent of this section.
- T) An element not listed here that meets the intent

## **AWNINGS, CANOPIES AND MARQUEES**



Awnings (*see left*) are wholly supported by the building to which they are attached and comprised of a lightweight frame structure with a covering.

Marquees (*see right*) are permanent roofed structures, fully supported by the building to which they are attached.



Canopies (*see left*) are a mix of the two, utilizing both a permanent, rigid structure and a covering. These can be either structurally independent or supported on one end by the building.

***Intent:***

To encourage and implement an attractive and functional pedestrian environment. Awnings, canopies and marquees provide a visually pleasing way to protect the streetscape from weather and sun. These features, when thoughtfully designed, add a welcoming touch to building facades in the downtown area.

Historically, awnings were generally a retractable-type utilizing cotton canvas stretched over a metal ribbed frame. The whole was mounted at the level of the transom windows and either mechanically or manually collapsible against the building to allow sunlight to penetrate the interior space and to protect clientele from inclement weather. In more recent years, it is more common to see fixed awnings as the framing is generally more durable and effective in preventing wear and tear. Canopies and marquees are more recently used variations of the fixed awning that are structurally sound in design and provide similar protection and aesthetic character to building fronts.

***Standards:***

*Required:*

**Central Business District Core & Outer Central Business District**

1. Awnings may be fixed or retractable. Retractable awnings shall not pose a safety hazard within the public right-of-way.
2. Projection from the building shall not be less than five (5) feet or greater than seventy-five percent (75%) of the width of the sidewalk or shared use path, whichever is less.
3. Glossy vinyl or translucent back-lighted types are prohibited.
4. Exterior valances shall not exceed twenty (20) inches in vertical length.

1. ~~Size and scale of awnings, canopies and marquees shall relate to that of the building architecture and features.~~
2. ~~Awnings may be fixed or retractable. Should a retractable awning be used, it shall be well constructed so as not to pose a safety hazard within the public Right-of-Way.~~
3. ~~Projection from the building shall not be less than 5' or greater than 75% of the width of the sidewalk.~~
4. ~~Glossy vinyl or translucent back-lighted type shall be specifically disallowed.~~

### ***Guidelines:***

#### *Encouraged:*

1. Awnings should be angular as opposed to round in keeping with traditional styles.
2. Permanent marquees constructed of glass, wood or metal and that meet all other design review standards are encouraged.
3. Fabric covers should be solid color or striped acrylic and compatible with other colors used on the building front.
- 3.4. Size and scale of awnings, canopies and marquees shall relate to that of the building architecture and features.
4. ~~A vertical valance of not more than 20" should be standard with the addition of decorative trim encouraged. Signage should be limited to ½ of the area of the vertical portion.~~

## **DOORS AND WINDOWS**

### ***Intent:***

To encourage attractive and functional building entrances and frontages that provide a welcoming environment on the street level while matching the existing character of the Central Business District. Doorways are typically recessed from the plane of windows at the front. This affords weather protection, facilitates window displays and provides a visual break to the front. Doors are a focal point and a compliment to any business front. They were generally made of varnished hardwood with large glass panels. Hardware was characteristically brass or black iron, large and ornate. Craftsmanship had a showplace in beautiful entry doors. Typically, finely detailed woodwork bordered the glass, which was often beveled at the perimeter and carried a name hand-lettered in gold leaf. Doors were massive by today's standards; 7 ½' – 8' tall and 38" – 46" in width. Generally, they were flanked by tall windows and an opening transom window above that featured the same detailing.

Windows were expansive, but generally of smaller panes. Large areas of glass are the hallmark of contemporary architecture and need to be visually interrupted. Glass that starts at ground level or close to it is also a feature of modern architecture that destroys the effect we are trying to achieve. Metal frame or metal clad wood frame windows are popular for maintenance but need not sacrifice traditional styling for efficiency. All types of window styles are available today in energy and maintenance-efficient material. Of course, the person wanting to restore their building close to the original, will opt for wood sash and trim with heavy wood mullions.



This building features an inviting, decorative entryway, recessed from the front plane. The arched transom windows and brightly colored doors act as focal points, drawing attention at the pedestrian scale.

Transom windows so typical of early architecture are a feature that should be encouraged in remodeling. They are almost universally consistent in their appearance on Metcalf Street, but have been covered in almost every case.

## ***Standards:***

*Required:*

### **Central Business District Core**

1. Measured vertically between two (2) and eight (8) feet above the ground, all storefront facades that face the public right-of-way shall consist of no less than sixty-five percent (65%) glass display windows.
2. Between the ground and the highest elevation of the building façade, all storefront facades, regardless of location (including facing an internal parking lot), shall consist of no less than sixty-five percent (65%) glazing. Windows may be opaque or transparent.
3. Windows twenty (20) square feet in size and larger shall have a multi-paned or gridded appearance. False muntins or simulated divided lites between window panes are acceptable.
4. Doors used as a primary entrance shall consist of no less than sixty-five percent (65%) glazing. Windows may be opaque or transparent.
5. Bright finish stainless steel or aluminum, fiberglass, and plastic are prohibited.
6. Garage doors are prohibited.
  - a. An exception may be made by the Director of Community Development if enough decorative treatment is incorporated into the design of the garage door. The applicant shall request the exception in writing through a design review application.
7. Doors not intended for pedestrian use are prohibited.

### **Outer Central Business District**

1. Between the ground and the highest elevation of the building façade, all storefront facades, regardless of location (including facing an internal parking lot), shall consist of no less than sixty-five percent (65%) display window.
2. Windows twenty (20) square feet in size and larger shall have a multi-paned or gridded appearance. False muntins or simulated divided lites between window panes are acceptable.

3. Garage doors shall incorporate at least one decorative treatment, including but not limited to glazing, architectural embellishments, murals in compliance with Title 17 SWMC, or other pedestrian-scale design elements.

- ~~1. All street-facing storefront facades shall consist of no less than 65% glass display windows between 2 and 8 feet off the ground with trim unless an alternative proposal is provided accomplishing the same intent with compatible architectural treatments that provide sufficient visual interest at the pedestrian scale.~~
- ~~2. A minimum of 50% of exterior glass surfaces must be multi-pane or gridded. False muntins or simulated divided lites between window panes shall be prohibited.~~
- ~~3. Storefront facades shall consist of no less than 65% glass display windows with trim unless an alternative proposal is provided accomplishing the same intent with compatible architectural treatments.~~
- ~~4. Wood is the preferred material for doors. Bronze, brass and painted metal is acceptable. Bright finish stainless steel or aluminum, fiberglass and plastic shall not be used.~~
- ~~5. Hardware shall mimic traditional and historic character, to the extent allowed under the applicable building code.~~
- ~~6. Door glazing shall be a minimum of 65% with transom glazing wherever possible.~~
- ~~7. Garage doors and other doors not intended for use on the pedestrian scale are specifically prohibited unless enough decorative treatment is incorporated to allow an exception.~~
- ~~8. Window and door modulation and articulation shall be incorporated in a way that is compatible with existing modulation and articulation of adjacent buildings.~~

### **Guidelines:**

*Encouraged:*

#### **Central Business District Core & Outer Central Business District**

1. Windows that complete the “tall front” feeling should be enhanced, not covered. If they cannot function as originally planned because of interior remodeling, then they can be opaque from the inside or covered with an awning similar to the old style.
2. Buildings with a commercial ground floor are encouraged to use larger plate glass between 2 and 8 feet off the ground at the storefront and smaller gridded or multi-pane windows for all additional stories.
3. Upper-story windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged. Typically, upper-story windows are 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 historically.
4. Transom windows are encouraged.
5. Decorative molding, framing, glazing and other designs are encouraged.
6. Decorative wrought iron detailing is encouraged.
7. Wood is the preferred material for doors. Bronze, brass, and painted metal is acceptable.
8. Hardware shall mimic traditional and historic character, to the extent allowed under the applicable building code.
- 6.9. Window and door modulation and articulation shall be incorporated in a way that is compatible with existing modulation and articulation of adjacent buildings.

## *SIGN & STREETSCAPE DESIGN*

### **GENERAL CBD SIGNAGE**

#### ***Intent:***

To create community identity and secure the vitality of businesses in the downtown area as part of a carefully designed, pedestrian-oriented streetscape. Signage is the single element most responsible for conveying the type of design “message” that is communicated to the public. As bright, attention-getting communication devices, signs, by their nature, make strong first impressions. s.

Variety is absolutely essential and expression of a store’s identity is completely individualized and subjective. However, there are certain parameters that, if followed with care, will result in a more pleasing expression to the public. Considering how important the signs are in establishing a solid, long-lasting first impression, deliberate and purposeful review of each application is very important. Poorly coordinated signage can destroy and overwhelm all other efforts combined. On the other hand, it can be the very best supportive element to the theme we are trying to encourage.

As mentioned in the basic profile, the Art Nouveau influence was the strongest force behind painting, sculpture, architecture and applied decorative arts. Signage was particularly influenced as a decorative form of self-expression. In fact, many in the sign trades recognize signage from 1900-1930 as the classic period in American style, where beautiful letter forms and decorative expression meet with the best craftsmanship and techniques. Businesses will find a wide variety within this designation. Basically, there are several types: awning, canopy or marquee lettering, carved wood, window (gold leaf and paint), painted wood, cut out or cast individual letters, wall signs painted directly on buildings and some very early types of neon and electric signs.

#### ***Standards:***

##### *Required:*

1. Square footage, location, height, and setback restrictions of signs shall comply with the City of Sedro-Woolley Municipal Code.
- ~~2. Digital signs are not permitted in the CBD except in the following locations:
  - A) On Eastern Street between the railroad to the north and State Street to the south;
  - B) On Murdock Street between the railroad to the north and State Street to the south;
  - C) On Puget Street between Pacific Street to the north and State Street to the south;
  - D) On State Street; and
  - E) On Ferry Street between State Route 20 to the west and Eastern Street to the east.~~
- ~~3.2.~~ Animated, rotating, changing message signs and signs that combine a white background with internal illumination are specifically prohibited. Exposed neon illumination or shielded external illumination are accepted alternatives.

#### ***Guidelines:***

##### *Encouraged:*

1. Letter style should be complimentary to Art Nouveau; Classic Roman and derivatives or Calligraphic styles. Avoid Sans Serif, Contemporary and any decorative styles that fight with the theme (such as computer styles or Old English). In cases where a corporate logo and/or representative letter style is used, criteria 2 and 3 below should be followed so signage can be integrated with the total theme.

2. Signs should have an outside shape that is characteristically decorative, or if rectangular or square, include panels, borders and decorative detailing that are distinctly complimentary to the 1920's architectural style.
3. Signs should be made with materials and techniques that are similar in appearance to those used in signage during 1900-1930. All free standing and projecting signs should have a base support of pose cover that is decorative as well as functional and made of materials that are as relative to the coloration and detailing of the exterior walls of the buildings they serve as possible.

## STREETSCAPE LIGHTING

### ***Intent:***

To highlight signs as well as entrances and ground floor details and to provide interesting visual breaks and detail in the streetscape. Decorative exposed lighting fixtures ranging from European traditional to early American to early 20<sup>th</sup> century all serve to compliment the pedestrian environment. Carriage lamps with decorative bases and arms and fluid graceful goosenecks with floral motifs are most associated with this period.

Indirect lighting can be used to flood exterior walls and fronts to dramatically accent architecture. Lighting hidden under soffit or behind canopies and awnings can provide excellent wall lighting and adequate security lighting. Free-standing light fixtures can be a great source of lighting at building entries.



Decorative pedestrian-scale lighting lines the streetscape in Sedro-Woolley's CBD.

### ***Standards:***

#### *Required:*

1. For any development permit that requires street frontage improvement, decorative streetscape lighting shall be incorporated at 75 feet on-center within the **Historic Downtown (defined in Chapter 11—Definitions) and along Ferry Street Central Business District Core.** Fixtures shall be selected from the City's list of approved decorative street lighting fixtures **and approved in writing by the Director of Public Works.**
2. New buildings with street-frontage of at least 75 feet in width anywhere in the CBD Zone shall incorporate decorative streetscape lighting. Fixtures shall be selected from the City's list of approved decorative street lighting fixtures **and approved in writing by the Director of Public Works.**
3. New streetscape lighting shall be cohesive with existing adjacent fixtures.
4. White or clear bulbs are appropriate. Colored light is prohibited.
5. The height of free-standing light fixtures shall not exceed building height.
6. Wiring connections shall be carefully shielded from view. Free-standing light fixtures shall run connections underground.

### ***Guidelines:***

#### *Encouraged:*

1. Exposed lighting fixtures should be decorative; ranging from European traditional to early American to Early 20th century.



Streetscape lighting can work to bring attention to exterior details such as this beautiful mural.

## 11. Definitions

**Art or Water Feature** - An historical, symbolic or abstract sculpture or other form that may also incorporate water, adding dimension to a public space.

**Artful** - A one-of-a-kind design that reflects the skills and talent of an artist, graphic designer or other design professional.

**Articulation** - An architectural term for when formal elements of architectural design (such as windows, for example) are styled in a way that create emphasis on those particular elements. *See right.*



**Awning** - A light-weight, framed projection placed on a building façade – typically over entryways or windows – with an attached cover that is supported entirely by the building. Awnings may be fixed or retractable-type.

**Balustrade** - A railing supported by balusters, or small columns.

**Belt course** - A horizontal band of masonry across the exterior of a building that stands out visually. *See right.*



**Bollard** - A short post generally used in a series to define an area or block access by vehicles.

**Canopy** - A permanent structure of rigid construction placed on a building façade – typically over entryways or windows – with an attached cover. Canopies may be structurally independent with support columns anchored to the ground or supported by the building on one end.

**Clerestory** - A continuous band of windows located just below the ceiling of a generally tall and important space.

**Corbelling** - A type of structural support formed by overlapping pieces of stone, wood or metal that projects from the wall. *See right.*



**Cornice** - The molded and projecting horizontal piece at the crown of a building. *See right.*



**Courtyard** - An open space enclosed partly or wholly by a building.

**Dentil work** - A series of closely spaced, rectangular blocks that form a molding typically projecting below the cornice along the roofline of a building.

**Façade** - The front of a building, or any face that is given special architectural treatment.

**Forecourt** - An open court in front of a building.

**Green** - An open grassy space between buildings.

**Historic Building** - A building constructed prior to 1920.

**Historic Downtown (CBD Sector 1) Central Business District Core** - The area bordered by the tracks to the west, Puget Street to the east, the former tracks to the north, and Warner Street to the south. Also included are properties fronting Metcalf Street, West Ferry Street, and West State Street, Ferry Street, and State Street that within the Central Business District zone.

**Kickplate** - A protective sheet of material typically at the base of a door to prevent damage to the door from blows or scratches.

**Low Impact Development (LID)** - LID techniques, such as:

- 1) Pervious paving, including but not limited to permeable concrete or unit pavers, porous asphalt, “grasscrete” and ecoblock;
- 2) Bio-retention swales, cells or rain gardens;
- 3) Amending disturbed or compacted soils with compost to an increased depth (min. 12” depth) and adding composted mulch as top dressing; and
- 4) Rainwater cisterns, with use of rainwater to irrigate landscaping.

Use of LID techniques shall be guided by engineering analyses that include an in-depth site analysis using hydrology models including infiltrative capacity of underlying soils, distance to groundwater, slope, natural drainage patterns and other drainage, environmental and public health considerations.

~~**Main Streets (CBD Sector 2)** – Properties fronting on Metcalf Street, W Ferry Street, and W State Street; the main entryways into the City, excluding the Historic Downtown as defined in this Chapter.~~

**Marquee** - A permanent roofed structure placed on a building façade – typically over an entryway – that is fully supported by the building and often incorporates lighting.

**Medallion** - A round or oval ornament placed on a façade of a building that contains a sculptural or pictorial decoration.

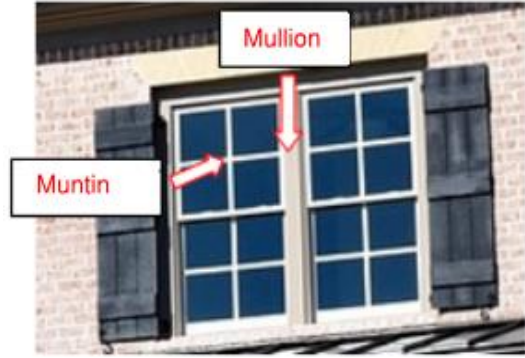
**Mixed Use** - Any development that contains at least two different land use categories (e.g. residential and retail).

**Modulation** - An architectural term for step-backs and forward projections of sections of a building front at specific intervals of structure width and depth. Modulation is used as a means of creating visual breaks on continuous exterior walls. *See right.*



**Mullion** - A slender, vertical supporting member that forms a division between units of a window, door or screen or is used decoratively. *See right.*

**Muntin** - A vertical or horizontal bar or rigid strip between adjacent panes of glass, often used to divide the individual panes into grid patterns. *See right.*



**Outer ~~CBD (CBD Sector 3) Central Business District~~** - All areas within the CBD Zone extending beyond the ~~Historic Downtown and Main Streets~~ **Central Business District Core** as defined in this Chapter.

**Parapet** - A low wall along the edge of a roof.

**Plaza** - An open area usually located near urban buildings and often featuring walkways, trees and shrubs, places to sit and sometimes shops.

**Plinth** - A base wall piece, such as a square block or base course. *See right.*



**Portico** - A colonnaded porch entrance or covered walkway supported by evenly-spaced columns.

**Public Space** - Any of a variety of spaces that are accessible and usable by the general public, such as a plaza, green, courtyard, forecourt, sitting area, widened sidewalk, stormwater rain garden and art or water feature.

**Shed Roof** - A roof having only one sloping plane and no hips, ridges or valleys.

**Site Furnishings, Permanent** - Seating, benches, trash receptacles, bollards, planters, drinking fountains, low-scale lighting and other such non-movable, year-round elements oriented to pedestrians. Tables and chairs that are moved in and out of establishments at night are not considered permanent site furnishings.

**Sitting Area** - An open area filled with low walls, benches and/or tables and chairs.

**Stormwater Rain Garden** - Landscaped areas that are designed as stormwater management facilities. These landscaped areas are made up of a specialized mix of plants that can tolerate seasonal wet and dry conditions and soils that can rapidly absorb and store runoff. These facilities utilize complex relationships between plants and soils to filter pollutants, reduce runoff volume and rate of discharge and promote groundwater recharge through infiltration. These areas are constructed with a specialized soil and plant mix that is attractive and has low maintenance

requirements. Because of their flexibility in size, shape and appearance, they can be installed on almost any type of land use in a variety of conditions.

**Streetscape** - The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, sidewalks, street furniture, trees, open space, etc. that work in combination to form the street's character.

**Transom window** - A window installed directly above a door or larger window to let in extra light and to serve a decorative purpose. Traditionally, transom windows are able to be opened for air flow.

**“Vision” glass** - An architectural term for clear glass.

**Wainscoting** - Paneling provided at the lower portion of a wall for the purposes of protection and/or architectural detailing. *See right.*

**Widened Sidewalk** - Space created adjacent to the public sidewalk in which pedestrians may easily linger.

