



MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item # 67

To: Metropolitan Planning Commission
From: Michael Reynolds, Planner II
Date: Monday, June 30, 2008
Re: Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines Amendments

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE the amendments to the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the Downtown Design Overlay District one year update process for City Council, MPC staff and the Downtown Design Review Board have proposed multiple modifications/additions to the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines based on the case experience through the year. The changes range from general map updates to the addition of a new district. The proposed changes are outlined below with notes for further explanation. [The draft Guidelines have been provided to view as proposed.](#)

Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines Update *Approved by Downtown Design Review Board 6/18/08*

1. Add revision date to the front page.
2. Update the table of contents with all changes.
3. Remove D-1 and C-2 ordinance from the Appendix
 - i. Add a Reference to Zoning Ordinance on the back of the Title page of the guidelines
 1. Additional References:
 - a. The Downtown Design Overlay District zoning, as with the entire City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance, can be viewed at the Metropolitan Planning Commission office or viewed online at <http://www.knoxmpc.org>.
- ⇒ **NOTE: The ordinances are removed because of the need to update the printed Guidelines every time either the D-1 or C-2 ordinances are amended.**
4. Update all maps with current maps (Page 2, 22, 33, 45)
 - i. Removing "Proposed" from title
 - ii. Change legend to reflect new map
 - iii. Add date of creation and disclaimer to see current map at MPC office.
5. Add to Section A. Public Realm 3. Parking Facilities (Page 7)
 - i. 3g. Access to parking garages should not limit options for development of contiguous or adjoining space, especially on corner lots.
- ⇒ **NOTE: The guidelines currently are vague on how parking garage entrance access should be treated. There has been an observed issue with allowing**

entrance access through a surface parking lot on a prominent corner, which will inhibit the future development of the parking lot because of the need to retain the access to the structured garage.

6. Change ground floor Visible Transmittance requirement (Page 15)

- i. Change Section 1: B.5e to the following: All windows at the pedestrian level should be clear.

⇒ **NOTE: It has been determined that the Visible Transmittance ratio is not reliable when trying to limit the amount of tint on a ground floor storefront/window. A clear window could have a Visible Transmittance that would not be allowed under the current guidelines. There is not a standard tinting gradient by the window manufacturing industry so if a ground floor window is not clear a window sample will need to be presented and approved by the board.**

7. Demolitions (Page 19)

- i. Add Section B. Private Realm 8. Demolition and Removal of Building Features: The demolition of buildings in areas of downtown outside Historic Overlay Districts and National Register Districts, or properties listed individually on the National Register, may be appropriate when in compliance with the guidelines. Also, the removal of building features may be approved with appropriate façade treatment.

1. If a building is demolished, all visible unutilized building material must be removed from site and vegetated or otherwise brought into compliance with the guidelines.
2. Any building features facing a publicly-oriented space (not including alleys) shall not be removed/demolished without a Certificate of Appropriateness.
3. See Section 1.C for guidance on demolitions and removal of building features in National Register Districts.

⇒ **NOTE: Demolitions are currently only addressed in the Historic Resources section of the guidelines and are not stated as D-1 ordinance as being required to have a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) before obtaining a permit. There has been instances when building features have been demolished (such as storefronts) before submitting for a Certificate of Appropriateness so there is no opportunity to assess the current conditions, especially in National Historic Districts. The proposed Demolition and Removal of Building Features section will require all removal of building features and building demolitions to receive a CoA. In order to receive a CoA an applicant must provide information on how they plan to meet the guidelines once the building features have been removed or, in the case of a full demolition, how the site will be stabilized or otherwise brought in compliance with the guidelines.**

8. Change hanging sign guideline 7a on page 28 to the following:

- i. ..., or off the front of the building as a projecting sign (maximum size: 9 square feet)

⇒ **NOTE: Through the last year the board has approved numerous hanging/shingle signs and all of them were over the maximum allowed of 6 square feet. It was determined that 9 square feet was more appropriate and consistent with the sizes being approved. The change of nomenclature from hanging/shingle sign to projecting sign was necessary because by definition in the zoning ordinance a hanging/shingle sign cannot be over 6**

square feet and it is one specific style of sign. A projecting sign does not have a maximum size as defined and encompasses more sign styles because it is defined as any sign that projects more than 12 inches beyond the face of a building.

9. Change shingle/hanging sign guidelines to the following on page 37 (1b) & 40 (1a):
 - i. Projecting signs of modest size (9 square feet, maximum); a larger sign must be approved by the board.
- ⇒ **NOTE: see note for #8.**
10. Add a new district to Section 2: The Districts (Page 41-42)
 - i. D. The Promenade District
The Promenade is a unique structure downtown that is located behind the buildings that front on the east side of the 400 block of South Gay Street. The Promenade was created in the 1950's in an attempt to coordinate business interests to compete with a suburban shopping center. A convenient rear parking lot was created with access to the Promenade, which acts as a secondary entrance/storefront for the buildings. A rear façade covering was installed to give the building a unified look. As the result of changes over time, many of the buildings have been renovated and the rear façade covering was removed to expose windows.
Recommended Signs: These recommendations for signs acknowledge the uniqueness of the Promenade and needs of the businesses that access the walkway. The signage on the Promenade shall count toward the maximum allowable signage for the associated buildings.
 1. Arcade signs of modest size, not over 6 square feet and centered on the Promenade walkway.
 2. One Promenade sign per building located above the concrete support structure and at the bottom edge of the metal awning. The sign should be no wider than the distance between two concrete support structures, no taller than 5 feet and not over 60 square feet. The signs should be located in every other concrete support structure bay.
 3. The signs should be lighted externally and the Promenade sign should not have upward facing lights.
- ⇒ **NOTE: The City of Knoxville would like to start allowing signs to be attached to the City owned Promenade structure to be accommodating to business that have access and storefronts on the Promenade. Since Promenade is a unique structure downtown and the sign guidelines have been organized in a District format it was necessary to create a new specific district. These guidelines will not limit any existing signage rights, but will grant two new signage opportunities when the property owners enter into a limited use agreement with the City.**
11. Change Section 3.D Administrative Procedures to include demolitions as projects that require a Certificate of Appropriateness. **Bold** text is new. (Page 44)
 - i. Developers of major downtown projects (new construction, changes to a building façade that faces a street, **demolitions** and parking facility development or redevelopment)...