

CHAPTER TEN - COMMUNITY DESIGN



10.0 Introduction

The picturesque confluence of the Payette and Snake Rivers provides Payette with a distinctly identifiable and desirable Idaho location. The historic downtown with its period brick office buildings is platted on a true north-south grid with the blocks measuring 300 feet by 300 feet. Street rights-of-way are 100-feet wide and 10-foot wide alleys run down the center of each block. East and west of downtown, pleasantly landscaped neighborhoods with wide streets provide easy access to City parks, library, City Hall, schools, and the post office. To the west, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks divide Payette in half. The landscape includes vistas of the river banks covered with cottonwood trees and wide open agricultural and ranching lands.

10.1 Community Design

Community design encompasses all of the physical elements that make up the city and its natural settings. On this scale, community design deals with the visual qualities of the city as a whole, as well as its relationship to the surrounding countryside. Issues pertaining to the visual qualities of the city include: building design, such as height of structures and the type of exterior materials; public and private spaces such as greenbelts, open space, trails and pathways; landscaping (type and locations of landscaping) as well as the control of noxious weeds; public access, gateways, location of sidewalks, and protecting historic structures.

10.2 Building Design

The overall size and shape of a building(s) can have a huge impact on the surrounding area and on how a development is perceived by the community, depending on where it is located. The height of a new building is extremely important; too high and the building can overwhelm

neighboring properties, too low and it can create a gap in the physical "fabric" of the area. The overall scale and massing of a new building should also try to match that of the surrounding community. The overall form of a new building should incorporate as much variety as possible and avoid large expanses of flat walls or roofs. The key is to create a building whose size and shape generally complements the size and shape of the surrounding buildings.

Quality building design can contribute to livability, improved aesthetics and the sense of community identity. Therefore, the City should promote building design that is visually compatible with surrounding development and enhances the community in order to create and retain attractive neighborhoods and business districts. Compatible doesn't necessarily mean alike, but comes from a visual relationship between adjacent and nearby buildings and the immediate streetscape.

However, policies and programs should not stifle creativity, individuality or personal choice and should be reasonably related to health, safety and welfare issues of the community. Design related policies should be as clear and objective as possible, but should also recognize that each community has special and unique characteristics. What is visually compatible in one location may not be appropriate in another location.

10.3 Residential and Multi-family Residential Design Issues

In developing design guidelines the following items should be considered:

10.3.1 Design Image - Avoid creating buildings that look strange or out of place in the neighborhood.

10.3.2 Visual Complexity - Consider providing as much visual and architectural complexity as possible to the building's appearance while maintaining a hierarchy of scale and a unified overall form. Consider breaking a large building into smaller units or clusters. Consider variations in height, color, setback, materials, texture, trim, and roof shape. Consider variations in the shape and placement of windows, balconies and other façade elements. Consider using landscape elements to add variety and to differentiate units from each other.

10.3.3 Windows - Maximize views by increasing window number and size (within budget constraints.) This will make spaces feel larger and lighter. The designer should use standard size windows, but consider varying where and how they are used. Consider ways to screen and physically separate ground floor windows from walkways - through screens or plantings - to provide privacy.

10.3.4 Location - In siting, orienting and developing new buildings and facilities, protect and enhance existing views and provide view corridors. This protection and the enhancement of views is a design priority.

Three general perspectives are critical to this criterion:

- 1) Views to a site from other areas
- 2) Views to other areas from a site
- 3) Views through a site from key locations within a development

10.4 Commercial Design Issues

As new commercial development comes, or as modifications are made to existing commercial structures in the city, the City may wish to consider the following guidelines that can be used to determine whether or not the design of the structure is appropriate for the city.

10.4.1 Building Scale - Use appropriate building scale. Buildings should not dominate the site or surrounding area.

10.4.2 Massing - Locate new buildings so they are compatible with the siting and massing of existing adjacent buildings and site development. Considerations should include setbacks, building heights, parking, arrangements and building shape and massing.

10.4.3. Entries - Locate buildings entries so they are easily identifiable from site entries and provide secondary entrances that are easily accessible and convenient to parking and delivery areas that serve buildings yet do not dominate them.

10.4.4 Building Design - For commercial structures these guidelines could help in establishing the values for the structures in Payette.

- 1) Richness of surfaces and texture
- 2) Use of durable, low maintenance materials
- 3) Significant wall articulation (insets, canopies, wing-walls, trellises, porches, balconies)
- 4) Pitched roofs and shed roofs
- 5) Roof overhangs

- 6) Traditional window rhythm
- 7) Articulated mass and scale
- 8) Significant landscape and hardscape elements
- 9) Landscaped and screened parking
- 10) Comprehensive and appealing monument signs
- 11) Clear visibility of entrances and retail signage
- 12) Clustering of buildings to provide pedestrian courtyards and common areas
- 13) Step-down of buildings scale along pedestrian routes and entrances

10.5 Industrial Design Issues

The industrial design issues facing industrial land use may not be based as much on building scale, massing, or entry issues, but more on the visual impacts to adjacent properties and include such issues as: noise, vibration and odors. These issues would have a significant impact on adjacent and nearby properties. In addition, City should consider the following in reviewing industrial property development:

- 1) Take caution when planning to build new industrial development near residential properties
- 2) Create design criteria for industrial development which is adjacent to or near residential development
- 3) Create landscaped and screened parking areas
- 4) Develop guidelines for landscape and hardscape elements along public right-of-ways
- 5) Provide pedestrian access on the site
- 6) Provide employee courtyards
- 7) Create clear visibility of entrances
- 8) Create comprehensive and appealing monument signs.

10.6 Public Open Space

Public open space - defined as shared outdoor areas intended for use by all residents - should be as thoughtfully designed as any other “space” in a development. It is helpful to think of open spaces as outdoor rooms and to design and furnish them with the same care you would bring to any room in your home. Open space provides the opportunity to create a safe environment for the people using such space. Finally, public open areas should be designed for use at night as well as during the day. Well-designed night-time lighting will help ensure that public spaces are attractive and safe after sundown. Sensitively designed public open space can turn a good development into a great one, providing a lasting amenity for residents and neighbors alike.

10.7 Public Access

In recent years during public hearing processes, the public has voiced a desire to have the ability to physically reach public spaces, employment areas, the downtown area and other points of interest via pathways, bikeways and sidewalks. The public may say that they had difficulty reaching their destination because:

- 1) Walkways were not connected or were in disrepair
- 2) Travel to a destination point was difficult because bike paths, sidewalks and trailways would dead-end
- 3) The bike paths that are developed don't take you where you want to go

10.8 Landscaping

Landscaping can help make Payette a more attractive place to live and work. The City can encourage the installation, maintenance and protection of trees, shrubbery and other landscape elements. Street trees provide shade to help keep buildings cool in the summer, conserving energy as well as enhancing the visual appeal of a streetscape to create a pleasant environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. The placement of trees in a parking lot can reduce the amount of heat generated, thus reducing air conditioning for the adjacent structures; it also reduces the heat buildup of the vehicles in parking lots. Landscape buffers can be used between commercial and residential properties to provide visual separation as well as insulating residential areas from noise and visual impacts. To promote water conservation, low-water landscaping techniques are encouraged throughout the city.

10.9 Urban Forestry

The City of Payette has been a member of Tree City USA for eighteen years. Payette should have an annual work program and events highlighting Arbor Day. The importance of trees in public spaces, as well as private yards, can be promoted and celebrated. Consider a city-wide street tree plan with various species of trees to create a cohesive city streetscape.

Source: www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA.cfm

The city's Urban Forestry program reflects community pride. Payette has received a "Tree City USA" designation by the National Arbor Day Foundation for the last five years.

10.9.1 Tree City USA Requirements - There are four standards a community must comply with to be Tree City USA qualified:

- 1) The city must have a Tree Board or Forestry Department.
- 2) The city must have a local tree ordinance.
- 3) The city must spend \$2.00 per capita.
- 4) The city must promote Arbor Day.

Healthy urban forests reflect community pride. The Tree City USA Committee and City Council are moving ahead with procuring enhancement funds to purchase trees for Centennial Park and an Urban and Community Forestry Grant to purchase trees to continue work along US-95.

10.10 Private Open Space

Private open space should be considered as individual outdoor areas where residents can enjoy sun and sky in relative privacy. Housing developments should provide private outdoor space for all dwelling units. Patios, porches, decks, balconies and yards should also be of adequate size with easy access from each dwelling unit. Fencing should be considered wherever appropriate to provide added privacy and to indicate clear boundaries. Special care should be taken when designing balconies to successfully balance the need for light and view with safety considerations. Outdoor storage is often overlooked, yet it can be critical in making private open space work for residents; even a small amount can go a long way. Well-designed, adequately-sized private open space will improve the quality of any housing development and should be considered a necessity rather than an amenity.

10.11 Private Access

Direct access to open space from dwelling units should be provided to the residents of the dwelling units. When terraces or balconies are used as shared open space, they can be located so that they serve as extensions of indoor common areas.

10.12 Public Sidewalks, Pathways - Installation and Improvement

The City of Payette has provided sidewalks/pathways for pedestrian access throughout the city. Some are established sidewalks/pathways that may not be connected. Pedestrian-friendly development is encouraged as an important aspect of community design. Walkable neighborhoods and commercial districts promote social interaction and are accessible to those who cannot drive. The presence of pedestrians on the street adds vitality to neighborhoods and shopping areas and provides informal surveillance of public spaces. To create and/or retain a pedestrian friendly environment, special attention must be paid to streets as a shared public space. Pedestrian friendly features include building entrances oriented to sidewalks/pathways rather than parking areas, a consistent edge of buildings along the streetscape, a variety of building styles, sidewalks separated from the road by planting strips and shade trees.

10.13 Downtown

10.13.1 Historic Structures - Payette's downtown has over ninety percent of its original structures intact. Many of these structures and facades are worthy of preservation and continued use. Preserving old buildings that are functional and keeping their historical significance is very important.

Investing in the downtown to attract residents and tourist is a continual process and new opportunities need to be created. Questions to ask include: What makes the downtown unique? What activities will bring people to the area? What economic opportunities are available? What type of funding will be needed to implement a revitalization program?

10.13.2 Downtown Streetscape Plan - Well-designed streets and sidewalks add value and act as a catalyst to the development of private property. The required capacity of the street to carry traffic determines, in part, the land uses appropriate for that street. Sidewalk width, street lights and other amenities affect pedestrian activity and a block's aesthetic quality which can determine how adjoining private land is developed and used in the future.

10.13.3 Revitalization Efforts for Downtown - Renewed efforts should be organized to make small but successful downtown improvements or strategize new events or improve buildings. A downtown merchants' organization should be considered, joined by other City supporters and activists. Community Development Block Grants are available from the State for infrastructure and downtown improvements; however a City financial match is required.

10.14 Traffic Access/ On-Street and Off-Street Parking

Adequate traffic access and on and off-street parking is important in a city. Adequate vehicular access can reduce traffic accidents, congestion, driver frustrations and pedestrian/bicyclist and vehicle conflicts. With proper management of on and off-street parking, parking spaces can be used to their best capacity. Further discussion of the issues regarding traffic access and on and off-street parking can be read in Chapter 7 Transportation.)

10.15 Community Gathering Place

Citizens of a community like to meet in a public gathering place, whether it is during the 4th of July, an annual community event or just a place to meet and greet. A specialized, landscaped, public area with a gazebo, fountain, clock, sitting area or other noticeable feature can provide a sense of community.

10.16 Gateways

Roadway entrances into a city are considered as gateways. Cities typically place welcome signs along these gateways. Gateways come with various conditions, but the preferred conditions of gateways are landscaped. These gateways serve as the first impression to a city. Payette has two gateways into the city. One is located at the island of intersection of US-95 and US-95 Business, and the other at the intersection of US 95 and 7th Avenue North. Urban and Community Forestry Grants to purchase trees to continue work along US 95. Future gateways include:

- US-95 and Northeast 21st Avenue.
- SH-52 and the Payette River Bridge.
- SH-52 at 6th Avenue South

10.17 Signage

Many businesses believe that signage is important to the success of their business. Signs can be used to direct, inform and entice. Properly designed, signs can enhance the character of a community. However, if they are too large, bright, or numerous, they may not blend well with the existing area and may compete for drivers' attention with important traffic signs and safety messages. In the interest of traffic safety, tourism development, and concern for the appearance of the community, municipalities may regulate signage through adoption of a sign regulation, or as part of its zoning ordinance.

Although sign standards can only minimally regulate content, they can specify design, and limit size, location, and the number of words per sign. Communities can create guidelines for the development community, which demonstrate (preferably by illustration) how good signs fit within the surroundings and enhance the appearance of the community. Sign regulations are intended to avoid unsafe placement and avoid visual clutter.

Regulations can deal with size, height, colors and illumination. Signs should be designed and scaled to either a pedestrian- or vehicle-oriented environment depending on their location. They should meet community standards and character. There are various types of signage available such as monument, pole, lighted, animated, sandwich, special event signs and others.

A concern regarding pole signs is that each new pole sign must increase in elevation in order to be seen at a distance. This is based upon the perspective of the previous sign. Some animated signs distract the driver and the use and placement of off-site signs such as billboards should be strictly regulated.

Some signs may not be appropriate or may be appropriate for only a short period of time, such as banners, flags and streamers used for grand openings. Multiple signs on the face of a structure can be a concern. Once ordinances are adopted, it is important that code enforcement is allowed to ensure that the public abide by the adopted ordinance. Sign standards are adopted in order to:

- 1) Maintain and enhance the aesthetics of the city
- 2) Enhance automobile, biking, walking, and other modes of transportation safety
- 3) Encourage the compatibility of signs with their surroundings and the zoning district in which they are located
- 4) Express the image the City desires to project
- 5) Establish signage which is appropriate for the area that is to be served, and the type of establishment or activity

- 6) Protect and enhance scenic views and natural landscapes
- 7) Protect and enhance economic viability of the city's commercial corridors by assuring aesthetic appeal to businesses and residents alike
- 8) Encourage reasonable, orderly, effective and sound sign display practices to foster high quality commercial and industrial development and to enhance the economic vitality of existing businesses/industries.
- 9) Promote the use of aesthetically pleasing sign material such as colors and type
- 10) Require effective signage

Sign size, height, colors, and illumination should be in keeping with the character of the city of Payette. Signage is an essential element of community design, and visual clutter caused by unregulated signs will defeat all the other community design elements. Billboards and other off-site signs should be strictly regulated.

10.18 Design Review

Distinctive communities that have well-designed buildings and storefront façades are better at attracting new businesses and residents and are less likely to suffer from disinvestment and neglect. Communities can enact clear and uniform design guidelines to gain control of their community's appearance.

The purpose of most design guidelines is to ensure that redevelopment or new projects are compatible with existing styles in the surrounding neighborhood. While most design guidelines are developed for historic districts, they can be established for development in other areas as well. Design guidelines can also provide clear guidance to developers about the municipality's preferred designs, so that these preferences can be incorporated in the early stages of developing a project, rather than later in the process when it is more costly.

Design guidelines can address some or all of the following design elements: site layout; building orientation; location of parking; connectivity and transition between land uses; vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation; building facades; building materials and colors; windows and doors; landscaping and screening; lighting; and signage. Communities may create a Community Design Guidebook or Manual that provides illustrated examples for developers.

10.19 Community Activities and Festivals

A festival is described as a time or day of feasting, celebration or performances. A festival or festivals can bring unity to a community. Farmers markets, county fairs, and other festivals and events can draw people together of very diverse backgrounds. Civic organizations and businesses should sponsor annual community festivals or events to bring the growing community closer together. Payette has various seasonal activities that can promote the city.

10.20 Visual Impacts and Storage

Properties in the city should be maintained free of trash and litter and the accumulation of weeds. Outdoor storage should be screened to hide unsightly objects. Paved off-street parking allows for the reduction of dust, which increases air quality. The removal of weeds enhances the visual assets and beauty of a community.

10.21 Code Enforcement

Property maintenance is the responsibility of the entire community. Events should focus on clean-up and beautification of all areas of Payette, including the neighborhoods, downtown, and commercial areas.

Code enforcement helps to convey community pride and increase property values by maintaining an urban environment that is free from inappropriate uses and unsightly materials, such as weeds and junk vehicles. Currently, the City's code enforcement occurs on an as-needed basis, based on responses to code enforcement complaints.

10.22 Dark Skies

The concept of dark skies is based upon light pollution, which is produced by city businesses and residents. The concern is the adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, and light trespass, decreased visibility at night and energy waste. In 2017 the country experience a solar eclipse whereby the city of Payette was located in its path. Visitors were not as numerous as predicted, but there may be some potential for star gazing opportunities in Payette by adopting a Dark Skies Ordinance.

10.23 Goals, Objectives and Strategies

GOAL 1: Improve the physical image and appearance of the city of Payette.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR GATEWAYS

OBJECTIVE 1: Enhance the city’s special character and sense of place.

STRATEGY 1: Establish an official “Gateways to Payette” Plan and Program.

STRATEGY 2: Reinforce positive images of the city design improvements at the city’s gateways and along the major travel corridors including US 95, US 95 Business, and SH 52.

OBJECTIVE 2: Establish and identify city gateways.

STRATEGY 1: Promote and encourage aesthetically pleasing approaches and entryways to the city through street design, landscaping and signage.

- 1) Enhance major gateways into the city to provide a positive first impression.
- 2) Create gateway signage that will enhance the area and improve the city’s identity.
- 3) Expand the city entrance signage to all entries into the city.
- 4) Develop a visual gateway to improve the city’s identity.
- 5) Develop a landscaping design and maintenance program for all gateways into the community.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR PAYETTE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen and enhance the city of Payette’s downtown area for the citizens of Payette.

STRATEGY 1: Maintain streetscape plan items, including sidewalk paving, trees, planting strips, irrigation, streetlights, and other furnishings.

STRATEGY 2: Implement a streetscapes plan including elements such as street furniture, surfaces, street trees, kiosks, public art and interpretive signage in designated special areas downtown.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR DESIGN REVIEW

OBJECTIVE 4: Establish building and site design standards.

STRATEGY 1: Protect and enhance the visual character and economic value of the city's commercial corridors.

STRATEGY 2: Maintain a design review process to enhance the types of structures that are being constructed.

STRATEGY 3: Develop and implement design guidelines for Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development.

STRATEGY 4: In developing future design review guidelines, the city may consider the following issues:

- 1) Foster designs that are sensitive to both the proposed site as well as the surroundings.
- 2) Encourage improvements that respect or enhance neighborhood character.
- 3) Promote individuality and character of commercial areas.
- 4) Reinforce the importance of the pedestrian with scale and space.
- 5) Integrate appropriate landscaping that aesthetically enhances the ground level.
- 6) Promote the design of courtyards and public open spaces where appropriate.
- 7) Suggest ideas and give examples for practical design solutions.
- 8) Achieve a high standard of commercial design.
- 9) Encourage design that balances the needs of both the pedestrian and the vehicle.
- 10) Foster a commercial setting that will contribute to the social life and economic vitality of the neighborhood and the city.

STRATEGY 5: Annually review the design standards to determine if any modifications are needed.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

OBJECTIVE 5: Enhance pedestrian accessibility along public rights-of-way and within parking lots.

STRATEGY 1: Public rights-of-way should be accessible to the disabled.

STRATEGY 2: Where appropriate, place sidewalks along public rights-of-way to provide pedestrian access.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACES

OBJECTIVE 6: Encourage a balance of diverse uses of the community's Greenway.

STRATEGY 1: Encourage private/public opportunities for the development of parks and open space in the future design of the community, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.

STRATEGY 2: Encourage private beautification efforts and develop code for landscaping.

STRATEGY 3: Utilize landscape ordinance standards to ensure adequate landscaping for new development.

- 1) Establish beautification standards for design, property maintenance, and landscaping.
- 2) Establish procedures and practices governing the protection, installation, and long-term maintenance of trees, vegetation, and other landscape elements.
- 3) Establish design standards for commercial development such as buffering, screening, and building placement.

STRATEGY 4: Annually review the design standards to determine if any modifications are needed.

STRATEGY 5: Establish and implement beautification standards for landscape design that include:

- 1) Expanding and developing trails and Greenways.
- 2) Improve infrastructure and streetscape requirements.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR LANDSCAPING

OBJECTIVE 7: Encourage a balance of diverse landscaping uses.

STRATEGY 1: Encourage private beautification efforts by landscape ordinance.

STRATEGY 2: Establish and implement beautification standards for landscape design that include:

- 1) Expanding and developing trails and Greenways.
- 2) Improve infrastructure and streetscape requirements.

STRATEGY 3: Utilize landscape ordinance standards to ensure adequate landscaping for new development.

- 1) Establish beautification standards for design, property maintenance, and landscaping.
- 2) Establish procedures and practices governing the protection, installation, and long-term maintenance of trees, vegetation, and other landscape elements.
- 3) Establish design standards for commercial development such as buffering, screening, and building placement.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR URBAN FORESTRY

OBJECTIVE 8: Continue to support the community forestry standards in the planting and care of appropriate trees and landscaping in the city.

STRATEGY 1: Encourage education in the care and maintenance of appropriate trees in the community.

STRATEGY 2: Encourage the planting of street trees and on-site trees wherever possible.

STRATEGY 3: Protect, save and maintain existing street trees and mitigate tree removal.

STRATEGY 4: Continue to support the TREE City USA program.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES

OBJECTIVE 9: Create public places within the city.

- STRATEGY1: Develop a public plaza that has:
- 1) Sitting places
 - 2) Trees
 - 3) Water features
 - 4) A place for food
 - 5) Easy public access
 - 6) Effective capacity
 - 7) Connections with indoor spaces
 - 8) Lighting

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR VISUAL IMPACTS/ PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

OBJECTIVE 10: Identify and determine the visual impacts (weed control), storage (outdoor and trash), lighting and utility structures effect the physical appearance of the city.

STRATEGY 1: Discourage proliferation of visual clutter along public rights-of-way, such as billboards, signs, dumpsters, power lines and other visual impacts.

OBJECTIVE 11: Properties should be free of unsightly objects, trash, litter, and the accumulation of weeds or “deleterious growth.”

STRATEGY 1: Develop, maintain and enforce beautification standards for design, property maintenance and landscaping.

STRATEGY 2: Enforce the removal of weeds, junk vehicles and trash on properties.

STRATEGY 3: Promote City-led private property beautification efforts.

STRATEGY 4: Establish a community-wide “operation clean sweep” clean-up program.

STRATEGY 5: Review and update the City code enforcement ordinance.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES

OBJECTIVE 12: Foster recognition, rehabilitation and preservation of historic sites and districts.

STRATEGY 1: Identify historic structures by conducting reconnaissance surveys.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR SIGNAGE

OBJECTIVE 13: Update the sign ordinance,

STRATEGY 1: Signs should be appropriate for the specific sign use and its location.

STRATEGY 2: Sign size, proportions and scale contribute to the overall quality of a project.

STRATEGY 3: Sign standards should be reflective of the uniquely identifiable areas of the community, and be compatible with their surroundings.

- 1) Revise sign ordinance to encourage monument signs in lieu of pole signs.
- 2) Maintain and enhance the visual aesthetics of the city.
- 3) Promote the use of aesthetically pleasing sign materials, colors, and types.
- 4) Prevent the use of non-conforming roadside signs on all roads and highways within the city.
- 5) Develop guidelines that provide time limits on the use of temporary signs.

STRATEGY 4: Update code enforcement regulations that will guide enforcement of the adopted sign ordinance.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR DARK SKIES

OBJECTIVE 14: Identify the visual impacts of fugitive lighting.

STRATEGY 1: Reduce the amount of ambient light that filters to adjacent property or in the sky.

STRATEGY 2: Consider developing a Dark Skies Ordinance.