



Carson City Downtown Mixed Use Zoning District Development Code



Table of Contents

- 2 IN SHORT
PARTS OF THE WHOLE
- 3 BEAUTIFICATION/CURB APPEAL
GETTING AROUND AND STAYING AWHILE
WAY FINDING
RIDING
- 4 GETTING AROUND AND STAYING AWHILE (CONT.)
PARKING
- 5 DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CODES
LAYING OUT THE STREETS
- 6 DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CODES (CONT.)
CREATING BUILDING-TYPE ZONES
- 7 DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CODES (CONT.)
OUTDOOR GATHERING PLACES/
COMMUNITY AMENITIES
- 8 DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CODES (CONT.)
THE LOOKS OF THE BUILDINGS
- 9-10 DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CODES (CONT.)
LANDSCAPING AND LIGHTING THE DOWNTOWN
- 11 HOW DOES THIS WORK IN REALITY?
- 12 NEED MORE DETAILS AND INFORMATION?



In short,

Carson City has been working toward revitalizing its Downtown for a number of years. In 2003, the City conducted a series of meetings and workshops with Downtown businesses, residents, and other stakeholder groups.

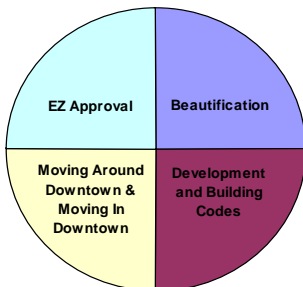
The following code and zoning changes reflect the community's #1 priority: **Put the “town” back in “Downtown” Carson City.** 🦶

Residents want Downtown to be a walkable place where people can comfortably live, work, play and shop.

Today a new Downtown Mixed Use (DT-MU) building, zoning and development code is in effect. With user friendly codes and building standards, revitalization of Carson City's Downtown will become reality through public/private partnerships.

Parts of the Whole...

Putting the “town” back in Downtown



Beautification/Curb Appeal

[Code pgs. 28-30. Section IV. H]

Highlights of the City's Downtown Streetscape Plan will include treatments to sidewalk and crosswalks, way-finding signage, banners, holiday decorations, lighting, landscaping, pocket parks and activity centers. To invite community events and encourage people to be in the Downtown's public places, an attractive highly walkable setting inspires locals and visitors alike to come early and stay late in Downtown Carson City. 🐾

Getting around & staying awhile is as easy as 1,2,3

Getting safely around *within* Downtown is the cornerstone of the new vision for Downtown, and will be accomplished 3 ways:

#1 Way Finding.

What is "way-finding?" It's a planner's way of talking about signs - but not your ordinary signs. Beautiful signs will become a part of telling our Carson City story and at the same time will methodically direct pedestrians and drivers safely to attractions and services.



#2 Riding. Your bike. The bus. New routes for J.A.C. (Jump Around Carson), Carson City's public transportation system, will be established throughout Downtown. Bicycle routes and bike racks will also be established.

FACT:

The existing J.A.C bus stop in Downtown is within ¼ - mile of all Downtown properties north of the Capitol Building.

#3 Parking. Ah, yes, parking. Parking is being addressed to encourage smaller sites and reduce predominant surface lots in the Downtown. The Code and Parking Strategy not only address responsibly meeting parking needs, but also address specifics for parking:

- In structures
- On the street
- Enforcement programs

Incidentally, a formal parking management study was conducted by a leading transportation consulting firm to address parking needs for the entire Downtown area. Please see the complete study at the Planning Division website (www.carson-city.nv.us, under “City Government” and “Development Services” links). It’s good news.

FACT: Public parking spaces, including on-street and in lots, are approximately 34% vacant at peak demand times within the Downtown north of the Capitol Building – *during* the Legislative Session. Source: 2005 Fehr & Peers Parking Study

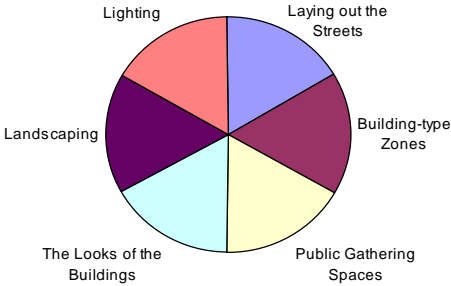
Getting Safely to and **around** Downtown is also important. Recognizing that although it will be a relief to get the pass-thru traffic off of Carson Street this will also create pressure on ancillary routes. To meet local needs strategic plans include:

- **I-580 Freeway** – will take the heavy pass thru traffic pressure off of Carson Street beginning in 2009 when the freeway meets Fairview Drive.
- **Stewart Street** – will extend north of William Street to Roop Street.
- **Roop Street** – will expand to 4 lanes.
- **Curry Street** – will be improved South of 10th Street.
- **East / West links** will be retained across Downtown.

Development & Building Codes

Standardizing the look, allowing for and encouraging uses and zoning for existing and new buildings is the function of the code.

Parts of the Whole Code



Laying out the streets

[Code page. 16 – Section IV. A]

It all starts with the right “grid,” the framework of how the Downtown functions. Our new “grid” really isn’t new, it’s a return to our 1950’s (and earlier) roots in that it is a framework allowing for buildings to be used for living, working and playing, AKA a “mixed use” grid. Key features of our grid make the area walkable, like:



- Blocks, to the maximum extent possible, will remain as they are. We want to avoid “super blocks.” Maximum block length = 400 feet
- Blocks will offer access to adjacent neighborhoods
- When blocks are combined development must adhere to guidelines to accommodate pedestrians, cars, drainage and flood pathways, views and significant features like the Capitol building and western Sierra.




FACT:

The Capitol Building dome is 112 feet tall (before the flag pole). Source: Nevada State Archives

Creating Building-Type Zones

[Code page. 9 - Character area Map. Pages 38-49, Sections V & VI.]

Creating appropriate Downtown building-type zones and boundaries is important so the whole area functions as intended, and the interests of the entire Downtown community are protected.

- **Right on Carson Street**
Allowing shops, restaurants, offices and residential on Carson Street will create a lively street environment, expand hours of activity and encourage foot traffic. 
- **East of Carson Street**
Larger tracts of underdeveloped or underused land currently exist east of Carson Street. This is where development that requires more land will be directed, say for building a convention center, a casino, a hotel, residential buildings, for example. These kind of developments would be accommodated via allowing for taller building heights, since taller buildings work better east of Carson Street rather than west of it or on Carson Street.
- **Neighborhoods west of Carson Street and east of Stewart Street**
In many ways we already have residences Downtown, since just two blocks west and three blocks east are large residential areas. These areas must be protected. Therefore, it's important to create a buffer boundary in the code to ease development into and around the residential areas. This will be accomplished by requiring buildings in the designated buffer area to look less business-like and more residential.

Outdoor Gathering Spaces/ Community Amenities

[Code pages 21-22, Section I V.E]

To inspire people to spend time in Downtown, public and private partnership investments will make an inviting environment possible thru:



- Everyone conforming to overall Downtown Streetscape Plan
- New developments will have to incorporate one or more of the following amenities (depending on the size of the development):
 - Patio or plaza
 - Landscaped mini-park
 - Protected walkway, arcade, recessed corner entry, or easily identifiable building pass-through
 - Offer outdoor public art approved by the City
 - Create pedestrian amenities, like: seating, lighting, special paving, landscaping, food and flower vendors, art and or recreation features, like a climbing wall or slide. 


The Looks of the Buildings

[Code pages 31 - 35, Section I V.J and Page 21, Section IV.D]

The code's primary intent is allowing for a variety of architectural styles and at the same time makes sure buildings are in keeping with Carson City's Comstock history. The community wants buildings to last, stand up to the weather and promote walking and safety.




In an effort to encourage "green" new construction, U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) criteria must be minimally met. Building exteriors will be guided by:

- Materials – must be durable and include, but are not limited to:
 - Brick, stone, or other masonry products
 - Steel
 - Stucco
 - Cast concrete
 - Split face block
 - Composite siding
- Four-Sided Design
- Lighting standards – exterior and store front
- Signage standards
- Street level interest with a minimum percentage of total area of ground floor facade in transparent windows, to enhance visibility which improves safety and makes at here appealing for pedestrians.
- Entrances must be distinguished by one or more of the following:
 - Covered walkways or arcades
 - Awnings, canopies, or porches
 - Projected or recessed entrance design
- Parking garages must comply with additional design standards
- Utility and mechanical equipment must be screened

Landscaping and Lighting the Downtown


[Code pages 16 - 18, Section I V.B]

Lighting and landscaping is an important part of creating the overall cozy, small town,  walkable feeling, and more importantly will create a safe environment that easily extends from day to night. Landscaping, lighting and the like will be accomplished from the City's side as well as private property owner's side. The following regulations serve everyone:

Easy on the eyes: Reducing the visual prominence of things like, parking lots and trash bins the new code calls for:

- Parking lot screens through masonry, wrought iron or other ornamental fence in conjunction with landscaping.
- Trash enclosure areas or screens for all new development or expansion, using compatible architectural elements and materials. Unscreened storage of trash receptacles is prohibited.

Lighting: Lighting offers visual appeal and promotes safety. The new code calls for:

- Pedestrian-scaled lights to illuminate walkways 
- Low-scale, decorative lights to accent architecture, entries, displays and signs
- Lighting that encourages and extends night time activity
- Lighting to prevent light pollution

FACT:


Standards are intended to promote retail uses along the sidewalk frontage at street level.



Landscaping: [Code pages 27 - 28, Section I V.G]

The actual sidewalks and even the street will be “streetscaped,” which increases safety and makes the environment inviting.

The code calls for things like:

- For a residential boundary minimum of 5 foot wide planter combined with a minimum of 8 foot sidewalk
- For urban boundary minimum of 15 foot sidewalk with street trees in grates
- Street furniture must be placed to maintain a clear walkway. 

Street Vendors: [Code pages 31, Section I V.I]

Promoting the long-term development of a formal street and sidewalk vending program will help enliven the Downtown landscape. Street vending offers an expanded range of Downtown experiences and opportunities for workers, visitors and residents; but successful, sustainable programs are thoughtful and well regulated. Specifics are identified in the full code document.

How does this work in reality?

By-Right Design Review

[Code pages 10 & 11, Section II.G]

It's all about "By-Right Design Review," which means if a project complies with what is outlined in the code, approval is *by right* and does not require the previous, cumbersome, time consuming approval process. The "By Right" system offers:

- **Simplification and Flexibility** – The new code simplifies development standards to allow designs that better respond to Downtown characteristics (examples include a building "envelope" system for managing the bulk of the buildings).
- **Alternative Approaches** – The new system allows for two alternatives for review:
 - 1) Buildings built to standards will be approved "by right" and move forward easily and quickly.
 - 2) Buildings that have innovative designs or unusual sites sites will be considered via a review process that allows flexibility, but is based on clear design criteria.



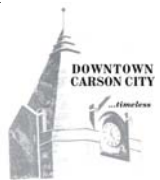
FACT:

Current code mandates that construction or any exterior modification to buildings within the Downtown Commercial District, even minor modifications such as signs or paint color, currently require a public hearing, no longer with By-Right Design Review Code.

Need more details and information?

Copies of the full Downtown Mixed-Use Zoning Development Standards, Parking Strategy and the “E-Z Read” code summary as well as other information can be obtained as follows:

- Download the information from the Carson City Planning Division website at <http://www.carson-city.nv.us>, (under “City Government” and “Development Services” links)
- Review the materials or obtain a free CD with the information at the Planning Division office, 2621 Northgate Lane, Suite 62
- For questions, call the Planning Division at 887-2180 or the Business Development Department at 887-2101 x1215, or send email to Lee Plemel, Principal Planner, at lplemel@ci.carson-city.nv.us.





For more information:
www.carsoncityecondev.com
(775) 887- 2101