



city of greensboro
downtown streetscape recommendations

Special thanks would like to be given to the Downtown Streetscape
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downtown streetscape recommendations



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Greensboro has seen tremendous activity in its downtown with a renewed interest in development in the last couple of years. With this development, City staff has recognized the challenges and opportunities that this new growth and activity brings. The Downtown Streetscape Committee was developed to proactively address these issues and to create a set of recommendations specifically related to items located between the curb and the building face, commonly referred to as streetscape items, within the Center City district. This group works in concert with the Downtown Development Advisory Committee chaired by Assistant Manager Ben Brown.

The committee has been meeting since April 2005 and is comprised of City staff and several downtown stakeholders. The area that was studied was the area generally south of Fisher Avenue, north of Bragg St., west of Murrow Blvd. and east of Spring St. This recommendations list was created to help guide consultants or other designers on future streetscape projects.

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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

Many of Downtown's sidewalks are narrow, cracked and are often scattered with pedestrian obstacles.

goals

Maintain sidewalks that are pedestrian friendly. These should be wide enough so that people have adequate space to walk and pass others without dodging obstacles such as light posts, trash receptacles, or cracks and crumbles.

recommendations

high intensity: Large buildings taller than eight stories and/ or high use pedestrian corridors shall have the widest sidewalks with a minimum width of 18'.

medium intensity: Buildings between four and eight stories and/ or medium use pedestrian corridors shall have sidewalks with a minimum width of 15'.

low intensity: Low buildings between one and four stories and/ or low use pedestrian corridors shall have sidewalks with a minimum width of 12'.

Sidewalks in adjacent neighborhoods that are located in the Central Business District shall be 6' wide with an 8" grass strip.

Sidewalk width bordering new construction may be flexible depending on its context and building use but shall be a minimum of 10' in width.

sidewalks

examples

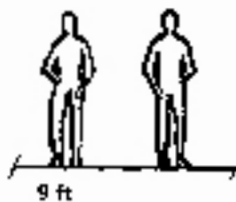
Left: These buildings on this block range in height from one to four stories. The sidewalk is wide enough though to provide ample space for pedestrian activity.

Right: The height of this building dwarfs its adjacent sidewalk. If this trend continued across the street and down the block, the street may result in feeling like a tunnel for both pedestrians and motorists.

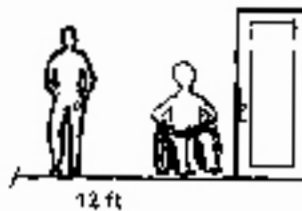
Below: Illustrations of dimensional standards for sidewalk zones.



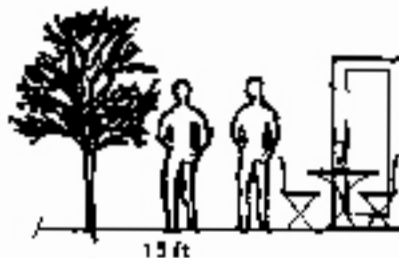
- At 6 ft sidewalks are difficult to maneuver for pedestrians. Allows no room for streetscaping, plantings, etc.



- At 9 ft pedestrians can freely move only if their pathway is unobstructed.



- At 12 ft there is ample space for open door swings and pedestrians.



- At 15 ft there is ample space for open doors, streetscaping, street furniture and pedestrians.

<p>issue</p>	<p>Trees and landscaping can provide added dimension by incorporating elements of nature in the built environment. These elements need to be incorporated thoughtfully so as not to detract or damage existing buildings and infrastructure.</p>
<p>goal</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive tree and landscape program to plant and maintain landscaping along sidewalks in Downtown. The program should also balance the long term needs for visibility of buildings, signs and other infrastructure.</p>
<p>recommendations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a street tree master plan that identifies locations and species of trees for each street in the downtown area. 2. A continuous trench should be considered for trees planted in tree pits, to allow for better root growth and therefore healthier trees. 3. The underground portion of the tree pits should be no smaller than 8' by 8'. 4. ADA approved tree grates should be used on all tree pits. Size dimension can vary based on location. 5. Raised beds and other alternate planting spaces should be utilized where appropriate. 6. Encourage businesses to provide landscaped planters along their building. 7. Trees should be protected from automobile damage. 8. Tree species should be varied on each street to prevent a monoculture.

examples

Above: The tree grates establish safety so that tree planting pits are not a hazard to pedestrians as well as adding visual interest to the sidewalk.

Below: This business provided landscaped planters which adds scale to the building and are also placed in a manner so as not to interrupt sidewalk traffic or damage the building.



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issue

Greensboro is fortunate to have a variety of local independent newspapers. Many of these papers and national papers are available Downtown with each paper having their own particular vending case. The stands are scattered throughout Downtown and lack visual cohesiveness.

goal

Develop an attractive, harmonious alternative to the assortment of newspaper racks and stands in Downtown.

recommendations

1. Create a committee made up of newspaper and magazine stakeholders, Downtown stakeholders and city staff.
2. Select a system that compliments other streetscape elements.

newspaper & magazine stands

examples

Above: A variety of newspapers are contained in attractive dispensers which are safely displayed in the pedestrian thoroughfare.

Below: The mix match of newspaper display dispensers can be unsightly and distract from a cohesive visual environment



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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

Some sidewalks, curb ramps and street crossings are not accessible.

goal

Incorporate accessible design standards into all sidewalks, curb ramps and street crossings.

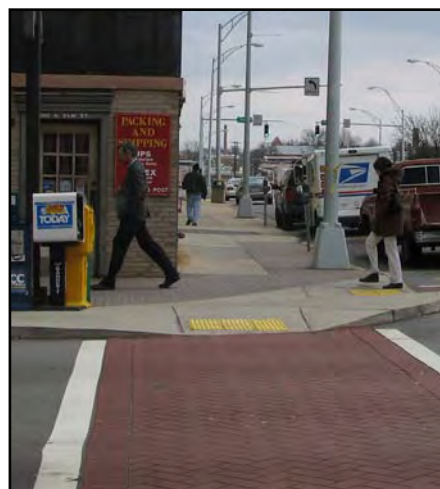
recommendations

1. Incorporate accessible design standards into all sidewalks, curb ramps and street crossings.
2. All new sidewalks will comply with ADA standards.



examples

Left: The sidewalk here may be difficult for people to maneuver. The light fixtures leave little room for people to pass and the automobiles infringe on the sidewalk.

Right: This intersection provides accessible ramps to the sidewalks that are differentiated in color and textures. These crossings help to provide safe routes for impaired individuals.



accessible sidewalks

issue	Paper and waste are sometimes disposed of in improper places, making parts of Downtown appear unsightly.
goal	Provide and maintain adequate trash receptacles for Downtown.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select a trash receptacle style and color that are harmonious with each other to be used throughout Downtown. 2. Systematically remove older styles with new style.
examples	
<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Left: This trash receptacle matches other streetscape elements in Downtown such as light posts and wayfinding signage and looks traditional, yet up-to-date.</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>Right: This trash receptacle appears out-of-date and does not match Downtown's other streetscape elements.</p> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>

trash receptacles

issue

In order to create a pedestrian friendly environment Downtown lighting fixtures should integrate the human scale as well as providing illumination and safety.

goal

Provide a mixture of pedestrian scale lights and street lights to improve safety and to help create a strong sense of direction on major streets.

recommendations

1. Select a consistent color for the light poles for the entire Downtown. Select styles of light poles that are harmonious with each other.
2. Light pole styles shall be selected from the Duke Energy standard list.
3. Identify and systematically remove older styles with new styles.
4. Provide electrical outlets and hardware for special event banners as needed.
5. Fixtures should be placed so they do not conflict with pedestrian movement.

examples

The lightposts here match other streetscape elements in Downtown and are at a pedestrian scale. The lights, hanging baskets, buildings and people all interact in a manner that is noticeable to those on the street.



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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

When development in Downtown grows and expands beyond Elm Street, there should be adequate resting places and benches for pedestrians in the area.

goal

Create many places throughout Downtown for people to sit and relax.

recommendations

1. Create a spacing pattern for seating throughout Downtown.
2. Select a color and style of seating that is in keeping with the other streetscape elements.
3. Consider benches as an opportunity to integrate public art.

benches

examples

Above: These benches, provided by a business owner provide seating space and help to identify the building from the street.

Below (bottom 2 pictures): These benches, as part of a public art project in Zurich engage pedestrians, and lend visual interest and identity to the streetscape. They combine whimsy, function and public interaction.



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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

Art in the public domain enriches the experience of anyone visiting Downtown. It may serve to help create an intimate and more memorable association with the Center City.

goal

Have a comprehensive program that includes public art in Downtown.

recommendations

Create a process for approving public art Downtown.

public art

examples

In Greensboro, public art can be defined many ways. We are fortunate to have projects that have been funded publically and privately enhancing the character of our Downtown. Public art offers opportunities to engage residents and visitors alike in our built environment while adding a unique character to Downtown.



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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

Pedestrian signals may be viewed as confusing if they are inconsistent in color and design.


goal

Provide signals at all major intersections that are consistent in color and design as the coordinated street lights.

examples




pedestrian signals

issue	Fire hydrants should not be visually jarring to the streetscape.
goal	Provide fire hydrants in a style that is compatible with the surrounding streetscape elements.
recommendations	Discuss fire hydrant styles, colors and standards with the Fire Department. Any decorative painting of the hydrants should be reviewed by committee.
examples	


fire hydrants

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issue	Cigarette butts often get left on the ground largely due to a lack of proper waste stations in Downtown.
goal	Provide adequate cigarette receptacles throughout Downtown to reduce the amount of cigarette butts thrown on the ground.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with property owners to provide their own cigarette receptacles outside of their businesses, particularly at the high-rise buildings and in front of restaurants.2. Attach cigarette receptacles to existing trash receptacles.3. Identify a model that cannot be used to damage property by vandals.
examples	

cigarette receptacles

issue	With an influx of residents living in Downtown, the needs of their pets should be considered as well.
goal	Provide pet waste bags at strategic locations throughout Downtown.
recommendations	Place the pet waste bags at green space areas with signs that read, "Curb your dog."
examples	

pet waste stations

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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

Articulated thoroughfares provide visual interest for motorists and pedestrians alike. In addition, clearly marked crossings and pavement edges encourage safety

goal

Utilize different pavement treatments, such as textured or colored concrete throughout Downtown.

recommendations

Provide a minimum 2 foot removable utility area located at the back of the curb made of a removable material, such as brick or cobblestone.

pavement treatment


examples

Different pavement treatments such as applied brick rendering (above) and combining brick and concrete (below) help to identify pedestrian crossings and distinguish between pedestrian and motorist zones.




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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue	<p>The mix of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in close proximity is one of the defining characteristics of Downtown. In order to ensure the safety of all those enjoying the area, and to protect natural streetscape elements such as trees and shrubs, bollards should be encouraged as both protective and artistic elements to Downtown.</p>
goal	<p>Provide bollards in a style that is compatible with the surrounding streetscape elements.</p>
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bollards may be used to delineate pedestrian areas, fire zones or for building security.2. Determine when bollards are necessary.3. Bollards must be breakaway for emergency access.
examples	


bollards

issue	Those utilizing Downtown’s amenities often come into the area and move about it in a variety of fashions. For those that bicycle there should be safe, attractive places to keep bicycles when not in use.
goal	Provide bike racks throughout Downtown that are consistent with surrounding streetscape elements.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Incorporate public art into bike racks.2. Possible opportunity for public private partnerships.
examples	 <p>A photograph of a green bicycle rack designed to look like a bicycle. The rack is mounted on a concrete sidewalk next to a light-colored wall. The bicycle shape is formed by the metal bars of the rack. The website address www.publicartinla.com is visible in the bottom right corner of the image.</p>


bike racks

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issue	Chairs, tables, flowerpots, benches and urns can add to visual interest along a streetscape as well helping to blend the private and public spaces.
goal	Allow for portable street furniture to be placed throughout Downtown.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with property owners if they choose to place portable furniture downtown.2. Identify a City department to be responsible for portable furniture.3. Create standards for aesthetics and safety. Portable street furniture should be broken down into two categories such as decorative versus functional and should have different standards accordingly.
examples	

portable street furniture

issue	<p>Many of the activities occurring in Downtown are currently posted in shop windows. Scattered throughout the area, these events are not always accessible to various audiences. By culling information together in attractive, centrally located kiosks, information can be distributed to pedestrians and visitors.</p>
goals	<p>Provide attractive, centralized kiosks that display a map of Downtown and current event information for pedestrians and visitors.</p>
recommendations	<p>Consider placing the kiosks outside of parking decks.</p>
examples	

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downtown streetscape recommendations

issue

Bus shelters should be attractive places for riders to stay while waiting on transit. By providing attractive and safe places to wait for a bus, mass transit can be promoted as safe, accessible and efficient.

goal

Provide attractive and safe locations for patrons to wait for the bus.


recommendations

1. Make sure the bus shelters are compatible with the surrounding streetscape elements.
2. Incorporate public art into the shelters.
3. Consider using advertising companies or sponsorships to pay for and maintain the shelters. This may require a change to the ordinance.

examples



bus shelters

issue	<p>Portable signage such as sandwich boards help integrate the private and public spheres as well as provide visual interest to the streetscape.</p>
goal	<p>Allow vendors to display sandwich boards outside of their businesses.</p>
recommendations	<p>Work with property owners to keep sandwich boards in locations that provide safe pedestrian access.</p>
examples	

sandwich boards

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issue

A variety of signage may add visual interest to the streetscape as well as provide pertinent information to visitors, pedestrians and motorists alike.

goal

1. Provide wayfinding signage throughout Downtown for visitors that is consistent with surrounding streetscape elements.
2. Modify current sign regulations to allow for decorative projecting signs.

recommendations

1. Work with the Planning Department to modify the current sign ordinance for Downtown.
2. Integrate a design review for projecting signs.

signage

examples


Above: Projecting signage provides an opportunity for integrating art and function as well as making signage visible to pedestrians.

Below: Wayfinding signs on Elm Street integrate art, history and function as they help visitors orient themselves.




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issue	Sidewalk cafes help to blend the public and private realms. These features encourage heightened street activity.
goal	Allow for outdoor cafes.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide consistent enforcement of sidewalk café ordinance.2. Update the sidewalk café ordinance.3. Assure that outdoor cafés allow for adequate space for pedestrian traffic.4. Educate the downtown businesses of the rules and regulations of outdoor cafés
examples	

sidewalk cafes

issue	Street vendors can provide variety and interest to the streetscape as well as provide needed services for those in the Downtown area.
goal	Provide appropriate locations for permitted street vendors to sell their products.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a physical permit that can be displayed by the vendor. 2. Create a map of approved vendor locations to be used by police and the collections department to enforce the vendor ordinance. 3. If possible, provide adjacent business owner with right of first refusal of street vendors location.
examples	

street vendors

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issue

Defining certain areas of Downtown may enable visitors to more readily orient themselves as well provide opportunities for increased public art and wayfinding through signage, lighting, etc.

goal

Establish formal districts that identify the different sections of Downtown.

recommendations

1. See the Center City plan created by Action Greenboro and Downtown Greensboro Inc.
2. Identify elements such as streetlights, benches, etc. to make each district unique.

downtown districts

goal	Identify potential funding sources and long term implementation strategies for Downtown streetscape items.
recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish an ongoing process for reviewing streetscape items.2. Possible funding sources include, bond money, BID district money, Capital Improvement Funds.