

# SITE PLAN REVIEW REGULATIONS

## **Section 6.10 – Additional Regulations for the Lebanon Downtown District**

### A. INTENT

The purpose of the Lebanon Downtown District is to allow for higher-density and mixed-use development in downtown Lebanon. The site plan regulations are intended to promote an active, diverse, and attractive environment consistent with the mixed-use and historic character of the district. The regulations support screening of parking areas and utility structures, pedestrian connections between sites and uses, usable open space, and pedestrian-scale design details, particularly at the ground-floor level, to promote a safe and stimulating experience. Building and site design elements should ensure quality architecture in the downtown area, foster community pride and local character, and contribute to a unified streetscape.

### B. BUILDING DESIGN

1. **Preservation.** Within the Lebanon Downtown District, existing and significant historic features of the building and the site should be retained, protected, and incorporated into renovations and complementary new developments. New buildings adjacent to significant historic resources should be designed to complement those resources, such as through use of matching proportions, horizontal expression lines, materials, and/or attention to architectural details like trims and secondary accents. Applications for new development in the Lebanon Downtown District must include a short narrative on compatibility, with reference to the structural details in the Colburn Park Historic District National Register nomination.
2. **Materials.** Primary construction materials shall be durable, emphasize high-quality finishes, and promote long-term community use, resilience, and character. Along the Downtown Mall and facing Colburn Park, wood siding is discouraged; instead, consider materials such as stone, masonry, unpainted metal, glass, burnished block, or cement fiber siding. Creative architectural design and innovative materials that support best practices in durability, ease of maintenance and sustainability are encouraged. Secondary facades or those not facing public streets, parks or plazas, may differ in finish materials from principal facades but must adhere to all other provisions and be of similar quality to principal facades.
3. **Opaque Surfaces.** Areas of opaque wall without windows or doors shall extend no more than 20 feet horizontally on or along any building facade that faces a public way, park, or plaza and shall be mitigated by design strategies like varied materials, contrasting textures or depths, decorative

reliefs, green walls, murals, or other architectural and landscaping strategies.

4. **Façade Detail.** Facades shall include horizontal lines of expression—such as string courses, cornices, window alignments, step-backs, building-affixed lighting, sign bands, material changes, and/or shading devices—to demarcate building floors and uses, to correspond to the height of adjacent historic or significant buildings, and to provide a well-proportioned pattern to the building facade.
5. **Screening.** HVAC, mechanical and electrical equipment, transformers, plumbing, meter clusters, refuse and other utility and storage elements must be screened or otherwise integrated unobtrusively into the overall building and site design and away from the public view as much as possible.
6. **Orientation.** Buildings shall be oriented towards public ways and sidewalks to prioritize pedestrian access. Buildings shall respond to public trails, including the Northern Rail Trail and Mascoma River Greenway, as a secondary access point where appropriate. Along the riverfront and Downtown Mall, buildings shall be oriented towards major public spaces and pedestrian ways.
7. **Form.** Facades of larger buildings shall demonstrate variation and include elements at a range of scales that help relate the overall building to the size of nearby buildings, prevent a monolithic appearance, and promote good scale relationships to a variety of context elements.
  - a. Large façades with over 100 linear feet of building frontage shall incorporate variations in materials and architectural styles, as well as details. Changes in massing, shape, or plane shall emphasize vertical proportions in the overall building massing.
  - b. Pedestrian-oriented entrances shall be provided every 60 linear feet unless such egress would create safety or security concerns for the building use. In such instances, a significant architectural feature that creates varied massing, such as a bay window or other feature, must be provided every 60 linear feet of the principal building façade.
  - c. Stair towers and elevators, where visible from the street, shall be designed with consideration of their potential as a strong vertical design element.
8. **Roof.** Design and elements should vary by use and location.
  - a. Roofs may be flat or sloped as most appropriate to the use of the building, site features, and the context of neighboring buildings, and with consideration to solar potential and to directing snow/runoff to appropriate facilities to prioritize safety.

- b. The roof edge must be articulated and offer visual interest through features such as a cornice, parapet, soffit, or overhang. The design emphasis shall be on the building's street-facing facades, with consideration to the overall profile and character of the downtown Lebanon skyline from gateway approaches and high-volume pedestrian routes.
- c. Decorative features including cupolas, finials, dormers, chimneys or weather vanes, and/or cresting should also be considered as part of an overall roof treatment, particularly as a part of prominent buildings and where such details are complementary to surrounding neighborhoods.
- d. Roof space may be utilized to accommodate building HVAC and similar systems, with screening where necessary, and to incorporate sustainability features such as passive solar orientation, rainwater or snowmelt capture, and/or installation of renewable energy equipment. Usable open spaces provided as part of features such as roof decks and green roofs are also appropriate.

9. **Building Façade Transparency.** The transparency requirements set forth in this section are intended to support and encourage vibrant and active shopping and dining areas in Downtown Lebanon.

a. *Applicability.* The requirements in this section shall apply to building facades along the following Primary Streets and Secondary Streets within the Lebanon Downtown District:

- i. Primary Streets. The Downtown Mall, Taylor Street within 500 feet of the Downtown Mall, and Hanover Street from Hough Street to Church Street, West Park Street from Hanover Street to Court Street, and North Park Street from Court Street to Campbell Street.
- ii. Secondary Streets. Hanover Street from NH Route 120 to Hough Street, Bank Street, Court Street, potential any new segment of Taylor Street from Court Street to the Mascoma River, Campbell Street, and Spencer Street from Campbell Street to Kendrick Street.

b. *Street-Level Story.*

- i. Non-Residential Uses. For non-residential uses, other than those listed in those listed in Section 30#.2 (10), (13) and (20), the following requirements shall apply to the principal façade:
  - (a) Primary Street: At a minimum, 50 percent of the building's façade shall be comprised of transparent windows or glass doors or both that allow views and/or daylight between interior and exterior spaces.

- (b) Secondary Street: At a minimum, 35 percent of the building's façade shall be comprised of transparent windows or glass doors that allow views and/or daylight between interior and exterior spaces.
  - (c) For purposes of this calculation, the minimum area of transparency applies from 2 feet above the finished grade of the building to the average top of ground floor windows or doors. Reduced areas of transparency may be acceptable to accommodate historic or context-sensitive architecture styles or window patterns.
  - (d) Storefront Windows. Display windows may provide up to 50 percent of the transparency requirement for views into and out of interior building space provided they are at least 30 inches in depth to allow for changeable displays.
  - (e) In the case of a street-level story having less than its full height above the mean grade level at the building line, a minimum of 15 percent of the building façade above such mean grade level shall be comprised of windows or glass doors or both that allow views into and out of the interior building space, provided that in the case of a street-level story having less than five feet of its height above the grade level at the building line, the requirements of this subsection (i) or (ii) shall not apply.
- ii. Residential Uses. For residential uses, the following requirements shall apply to the principal façade:
- (a) A minimum of 25 percent of the building façade shall be comprised of windows or glass doors or both that allow views into and out of the interior building space.
  - (b) For purposes of this calculation, the minimum area of transparency applies from 2 feet above the finished grade of the building to the average top of ground floor windows. Reduced areas of transparency may be acceptable to accommodate historic or context-sensitive architecture styles.
  - (c) In the case of a street-level story having less than its full height above the mean grade level at the building line, a minimum of 10 percent of the building façade above such mean grade level shall be comprised of windows or glass doors or both that allow views into and out of the interior building space, provided that in the case of a street-level story having less than five feet of its height above the grade

level at the building line, the requirements of this subsection "i" shall not apply.

(d) In all cases, windows shall be double-hung, single-hung, awning or casement type, and fixed windows shall be permitted only as a component of a system including operable windows within a single wall opening.

c. *Upper Stories.*

i. Non-Residential Uses. For non-residential uses, other than those listed in Section 30#.2 (10), (13), and (20), windows or glass doors or both that allow views out of the interior building space shall comprise a minimum of 25 percent of the building façade between the floor level of each story above the street-level story.

ii. Residential Uses. For residential uses, windows or glass doors or both that allow views out of the interior building space shall comprise a minimum of 25 percent of the building façade between the floor level of each story above the street-level story. Windows shall be double-hung, single-hung, awning or casement type, and fixed windows shall be permitted only as a component of a system including operable windows within a single wall opening.

10. **Entrances.**

a. The primary entrance to the building shall be oriented toward the street on which the lot has frontage. If the lot has frontage on both a primary street and secondary street, as defined above, the main entrance shall be oriented toward the primary street on which the lot has frontage. If the lot has frontage on more than one primary street, the main entrance to the building shall be oriented toward the street that carries the greatest volume of pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

b. Entrance features shall provide weather protection. Such features may include including covered entrance features, vestibules or recessed entrances, canopies, and/or awnings. Retractable awnings or other removable entrance features are permitted as appropriate to building use and design. When such open-air structures are provided as part of an entrance feature, they shall provide at least 8 feet and 6 inches of vertical clearance from grade, be compatible with any sign bands, and provide an average depth of at least 5 feet.

c. Buildings with ground floor residential uses shall include raised landings, weather protection, stoops, porches, and/or decks, for

each lobby or unit accessed from the exterior at the ground-floor level.

C. SITE DESIGN

1. **Pedestrian Access.**

- a. Each building entrance must be designed to prioritize convenience and directness for that respective entrance's anticipated main source(s) of pedestrian traffic, such as transit stops and parking areas. The **primary building entrance**, or the entrance that will accommodate most pedestrians entering a building, must be inviting and prominent in appearance, demonstrate visibility from the primary public right-of-way, and support the accessibility function required of all entrances. Pedestrian access includes paths, sidewalks, trails, or other features. Universally-accessible design strategies are appropriate for all pedestrian access features.
- b. Where pedestrian access is provided through an on-site parking area, the walkway or pedestrian aisle must be clearly demarcated by contrasting paint, material changes or textured surfacing, reflectors, safety signage, landscaping, or attractive barriers. The transition area between pedestrian access and building entrance, particularly for on-site crosswalks, shall be highlighted through curb extensions (bump outs), planters, pedestrian-scale lighting such as decorative bollards, or similar features to enhance accessibility, visibility, safety, wayfinding, and landscaping.

2. **Front Yards.**

- a. *Ground Floor Residential.*
  - i. The front yards of buildings with ground floor residential uses must create a comfortable transition between the private residential unit and public right-of-way, as may be provided by compact yards, porches, stoops, or other features that allow for privacy, improved streetscape, and attractive building entrances.
  - ii. The front yard shall be improved with landscaping appropriate to the site features and context of neighboring properties. Usable open space that is readily-accessible by building occupants and landscaped for active or passive recreation is encouraged as part of front yards.
  - iii. Service areas, equipment storage, meters, waste enclosures and similar functions shall not be located in the front yard.
- b. *Commercial Uses.* Where a front yard is provided for a commercial use, it must foster a safe and inviting pedestrian environment.

- i. The front yard shall be improved with an extended sidewalk area, outdoor dining patio areas, plazas, or similar usable open space that can be readily-occupied by building occupants or visitors.
  - ii. Pedestrian areas shall incorporate design features that offer function, visual interest, and are complementary to the building design, use, and surrounding context. Examples include soft- and hard-surface landscaping, planters, pocket parks, decorative surface treatments, shading like pergolas or patio umbrellas, vertical trellises or wall plantings, bike racks, artwork and attractive design elements, pedestrian-scale lighting, and public seating.
  - iii. Service areas, equipment storage, utility boxes, fuel storage, waste enclosures, and similar functions shall not be located in the front yard.
- 3. **Perimeter Landscaping.** Perimeter landscaping shall comply with the requirements for front yards and screening of parking areas, and, where proposed development of the site allows, the requirements for perimeter landscaping in Section 6.2.B.
- 4. **Screening of Parking Areas.** Parking areas shall be screened to ensure that they do not detract from downtown appearance or walkability. Off-street parking shall be designed to have a minimal presence, if any, along streets and other public spaces.
  - a. *Accessory Parking Areas.* For parking areas located on the same lot as a building containing the principal use, a landscaped buffer of at least 5 feet shall be provided along the frontage of any primary street or secondary street, as defined above. The buffer shall be designed to create an attractive streetscape and shall be provided through an appropriate combination of plantings, planters, benches, fences, public art, pedestrian-scale lighting, and low walls under four feet in height.
  - b. *Principal Use Parking Areas.* For lots and areas where parking is the principal use, a screen shall be provided along any primary street or secondary street, as defined above. The screen shall include landscaping having a width of between 5 feet and 10 feet. At least one tree shall be planted for every 50 linear feet of landscaping area. Semi-opaque materials or gaps allowing for views into and out of the screened area are required for any barriers exceeding four feet in height.
  - c. *Guidelines for Parking Structures.* When parking is provided in a parking structure, any portion of the parking structure with frontage on a public street shall be designed to architectural standards

including openings, high-quality materials, and varied design elements. When a parking structure is located on a lot with frontage on a primary street, as defined above, the parking structure shall be screened by occupied housing, retail, or other uses along that frontage. Occupied uses shall have a depth of at least 20 feet and comply with the Site Plan Regulations regarding building design.

## 5. Relationship to Adjacent Properties

- a. *District and Street-level Character.* The building and site design must respond to the unique qualities and roles of different streets. For example, the design of lighting, awnings, storefronts, window displays, and other elements should help to define retail presence and reinforce local neighborhood and district character through application of compatible and/or common styles that foster a coherent downtown identity.
- b. *Privacy Standards.* Balconies or rooftop decks within 15 horizontal feet of a side property line abutting a residentially zoned property must feature a railing system such that at least 50% of the area below the railing is an opaque material.
- c. *Ensuring Adequate Light and Air Access.* Buildings or portions thereof containing multi-family residential units whose only operable windows or solar access are on the applicable side of the building (facing towards the side or rear property line) should be set back from the applicable side or rear property lines at least 15 feet.