

I. Scope and Purpose

I 1.0 Purpose of the Guidelines

These design standards and guidelines are intended to:

- 1) improve the quality of design for new development, rehabilitation of existing buildings, additions to existing buildings, and signs within downtown Littleton.
- 2) in most areas, generally reinforce, complement, or recall downtown Littleton's older or historic, town center character. Littleton's older town center is made up of generally three distinct areas: 1) a commercial core focused on Main Street; 2) largely residential neighborhoods to the north of this core; and 3) a mixed use district, formerly industrial in character, to the south of the core (not including Arapahoe Community College).
- 3) in a few areas, encourage contemporary design and innovation appropriate to downtown Littleton's future.

I 2.0 Scope and Applicability

The design standards and guidelines apply to all City and private property, except streets and parks, within the Transit Impact Overlay Zone (TIZ). The TIZ overlays the area within one-half mile of the downtown RTD light rail station, effectively encompassing all of downtown. The downtown portion of the TIZ extends from roughly the Prince Street and South Santa Fe Drive intersection on the north to Church Avenue on the south; South Santa Fe Drive on the west to the railroad depression on the east. The design standards and guidelines also address the area within the proposed Historic District.

The TIZ requirements of the zoning code require a Planned Development Overlay (PDO) when certain conditions exist. A site development plan (SDP) is needed for changes in use that increase or decrease required parking or reduce open space. Title 10 of the Zoning Code establishes the process, conditions and criteria for these reviews. A PDO involves a public hearing by the Planning Commission. SDPs are reviewed and approved at a staff level by the city's Development Review Committee. These standards and guidelines are used in the review of both PDOs and SDPs by the approval authority.

The standards and guidelines are used whenever an exterior renovation, addition, or new development in the downtown area described above requires a Site Development Plan (SDP), a Planned Development Overlay (PDO), or both, including additions to, and new development of public buildings. In addition, all other requirements of Title 10 of the Municipal Code apply.

The standards and guidelines are also used by the Littleton Historical Preservation Board for the review of new construction within the designated Main Street Historic District, when reviewing a PDO. The Board will use the Historical Preservation Code (10-4-6) for the rehabilitation of existing structures within the District and for individually-designated buildings.

The design standards and guidelines do not apply to the design of Streetscape and other elements within the public Right of Ways or the design of public parks.

1 3.0 Review process

The Downtown Littleton Design Standards and Guidelines will be formally adopted by the Planning Commission. These guidelines will then be used by the Development Review Committee (DRC) in their review of the SDP (Site Development Plan), and PDO (Planned Development Overlay) applications following the normal SDP and PDO review process and submittal requirements described in Title 10, City of Littleton Municipal code, Chapter 7, for SDP review, and, and Chapter 9, for PDO review.

For projects requiring a PDO approval under the downtown TIZ overlay, the recommendations of the DRC will be submitted to the Littleton Planning Commission for final approval.

Design review within the Historic District and for buildings on the list of merit or designated as a historic landmark will be provided by the Littleton Historic Preservation Board. An appeal of the Historic Preservation Board decision may be made to District Court. The Historic Preservation Board is the final review authority for architecture.

1 3.1 Supplementary submittal requirements

For the purposes of design review under the Downtown Littleton Design Standards and Guidelines, the following information may be requested as part of the list of other requirements necessary for SDP and PDO reviews:

Conceptual SDP review

- 1) Photographs of the property (min. 8" x 10" images), and adjacent property sufficient to describe its context;
- 2) A site location map or aerial photo showing the property within downtown;
- 3) A site context map or aerial photo showing the project's relation to adjacent properties (including building foot-prints) within 500 feet.

Final SDP Approval

- 1) A three dimensional representation of the proposal showing not only the project, but also the adjoining properties. If a ground level perspective is provided, it should be constructed from a primary public view, such as from the street.

The DRC, at its discretion, may require additional information, or may waive any or all of the additional submittal requirements described above.

1 4.0 Relationship of guidelines to downtown zoning entitlements and requirements

Within the downtown area, there are three zone districts: CA, R-5, and B-2. The Transit Impact Overlay Zone (TIZ) overlays all three districts; however, the standards and guidelines do not change or over-rule existing zoning entitlements. In addition, they do not affect single family residences which are exempted from the TIZ overlay altogether.

1 5.0 Relationship of guidelines to downtown planning and character objectives

Although downtown Littleton still maintains most of the characteristics of an older small town, several existing and new conditions establish forces for growth and change. Perhaps the most potent long term new condition is the addition of a light rail stop in the downtown area. Coupled with the new condition is the presence of fairly liberal downtown zoning, allowing greater density than currently provided by existing downtown development. In addition, the southern portion of downtown is occupied by the Arapahoe Community College, which could be a greater asset if it had better physical connections to downtown.

The design standards and guidelines attempt to maintain and recall some of the town's salient characteristics, while acknowledging that downtown will change and grow into the new century.

1 6.0 Subareas

The Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines have been divided into eight subareas based on existing character differences in each of these areas. The subareas are described in Illustration I 6.1. The existing and desired characteristics of each of these subareas are described in detail at the beginning of each subarea section.


All subareas contain a complete set of design criteria for Site Planning, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Signs. Consequently, the design criteria that are consistent for all downtown subareas are repeated in each subarea. The criteria that are special or particularly important to a subarea are highlighted by bold italics.

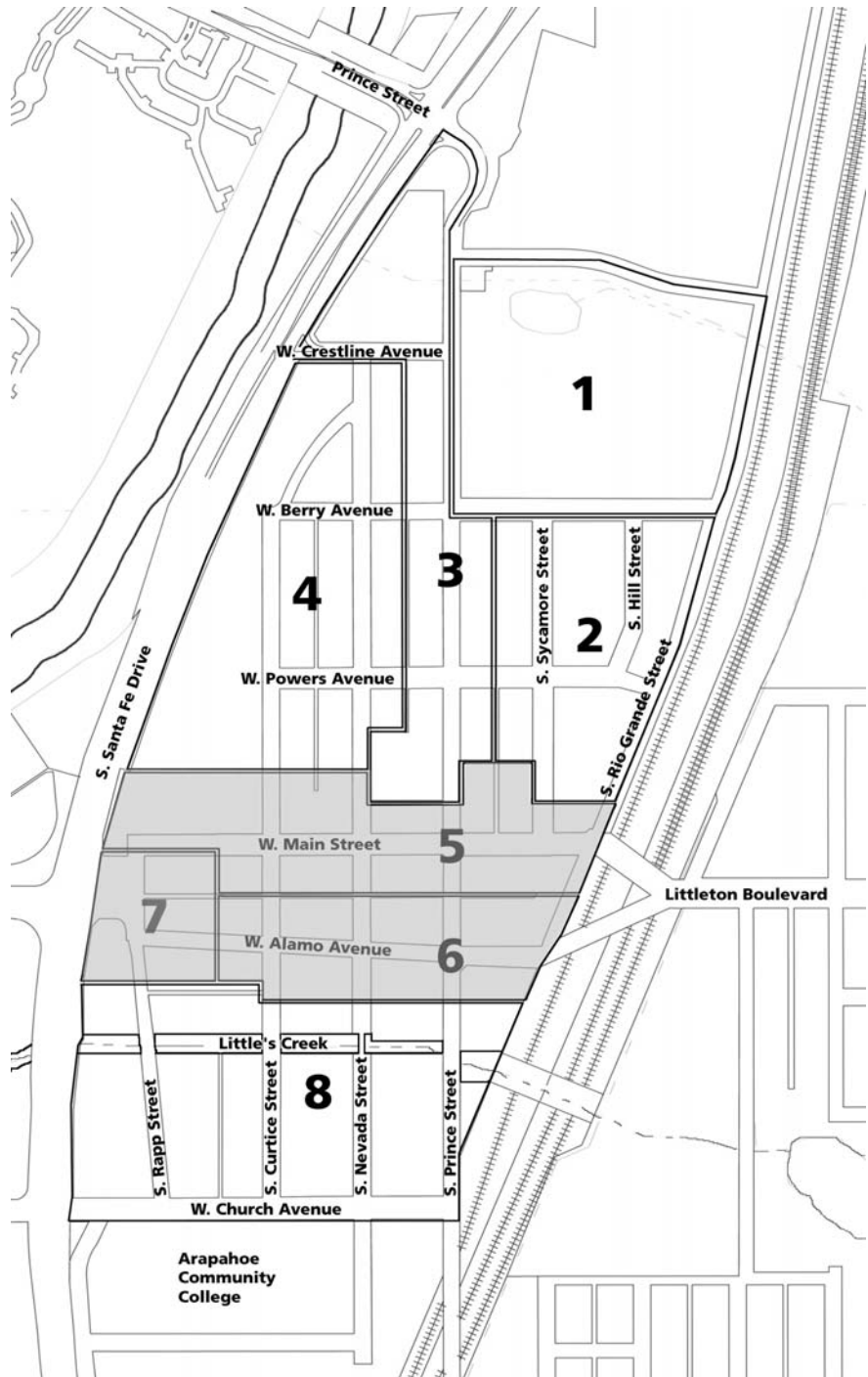
The design criteria are described by three types of statements:

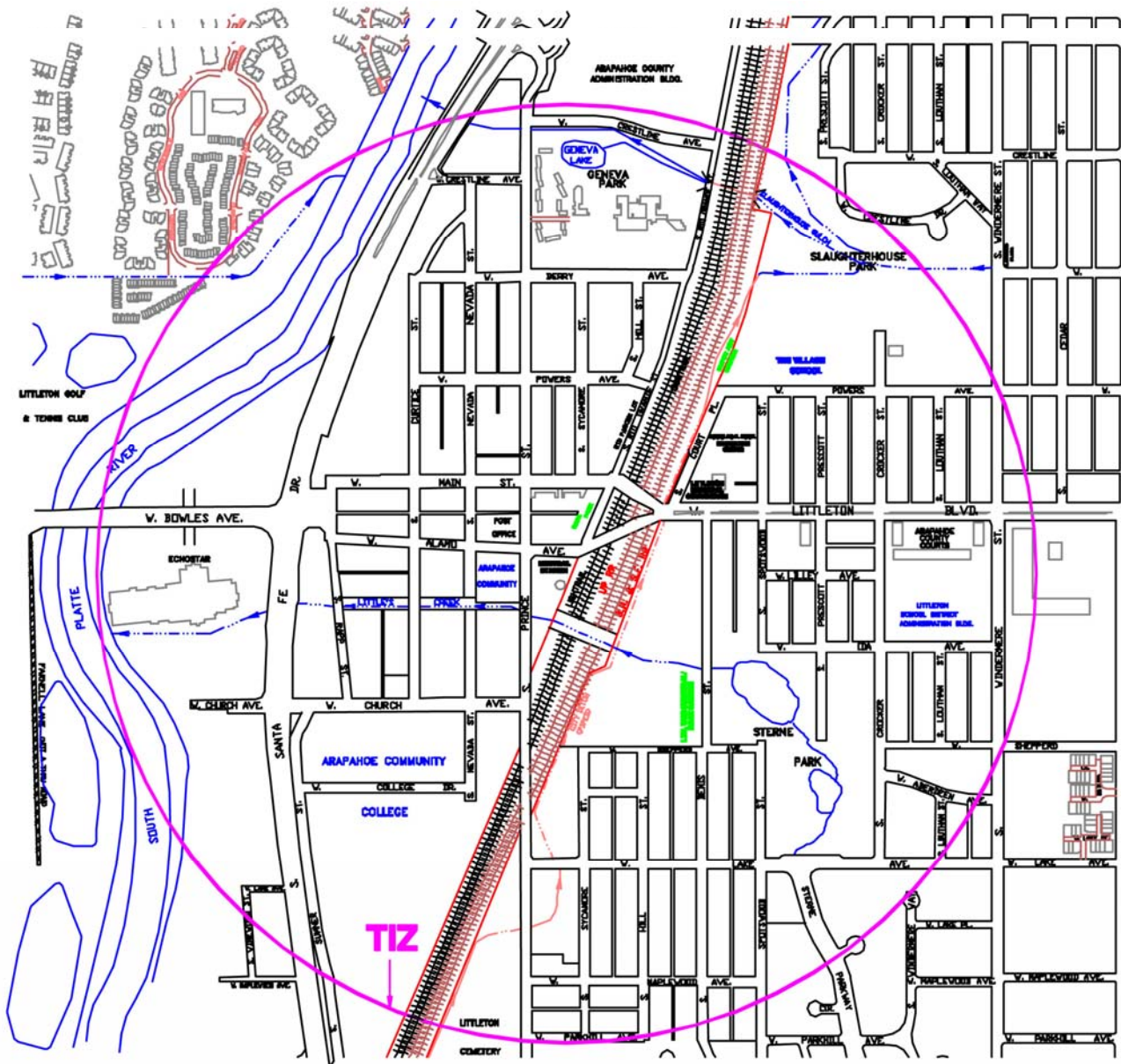
- 1) objectives, which present the more general purposes or the standards and guidelines;
- 2) standards, which are the most important criteria and are expected to be followed (with exceptions – see definition 7.14);
- 3) guidelines, which may be less important but still important enough to be worthy of consideration and negotiation.

**Subarea Diagram
Illustration I 6.1**

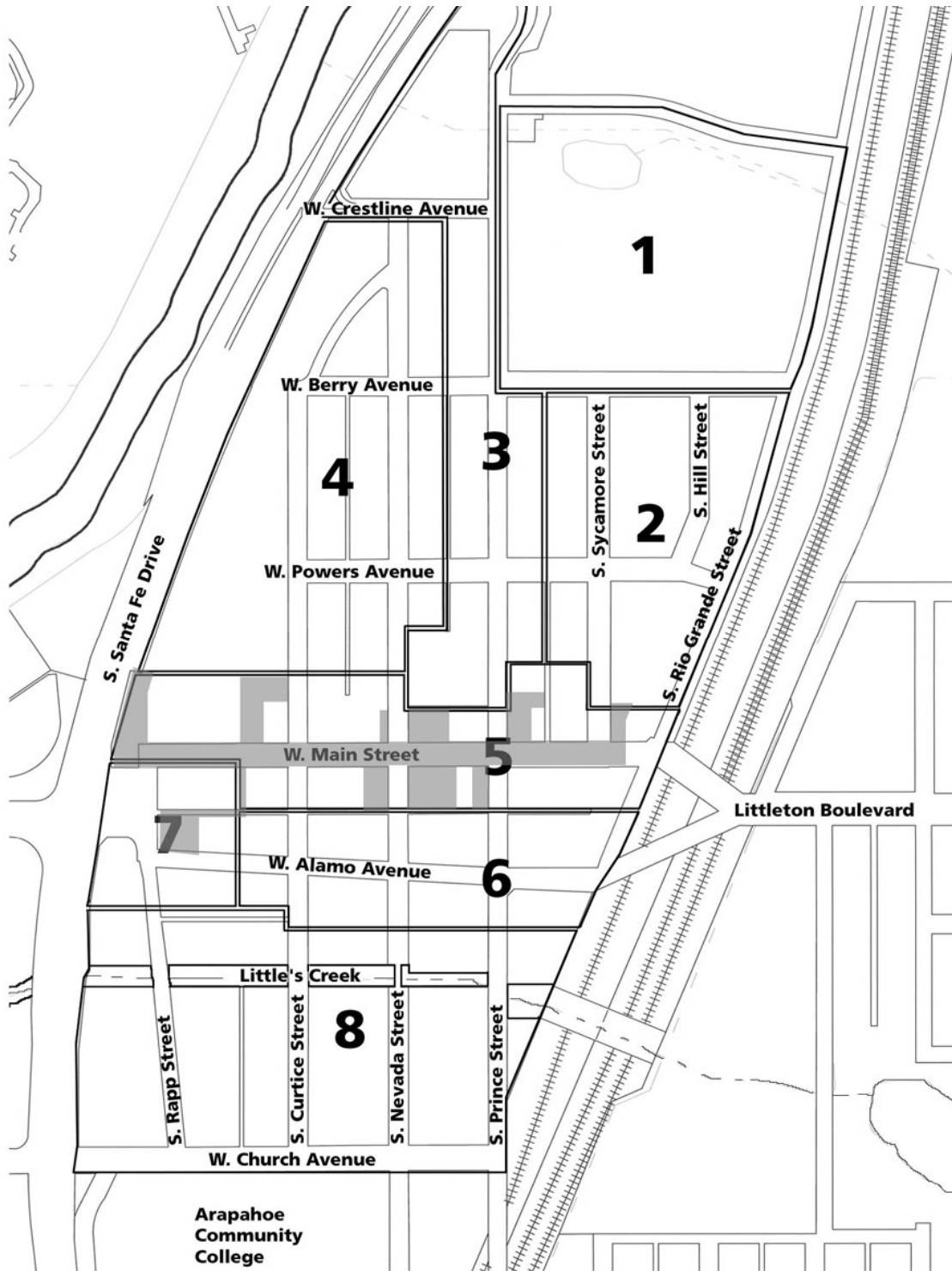
- 1 City Government Center
- 2 Northeastern Neighborhood
- 3 Prince Street
- 4 Northwestern Neighborhood
- 5 Main Street
- 6 Alamo Street
- 7 Bowles/South Santa Fe Drive Entry Area
- 8 Southern Neighborhood

Downtown Core 





Transit Impact Zone (TIZ)
Illustration 2.0

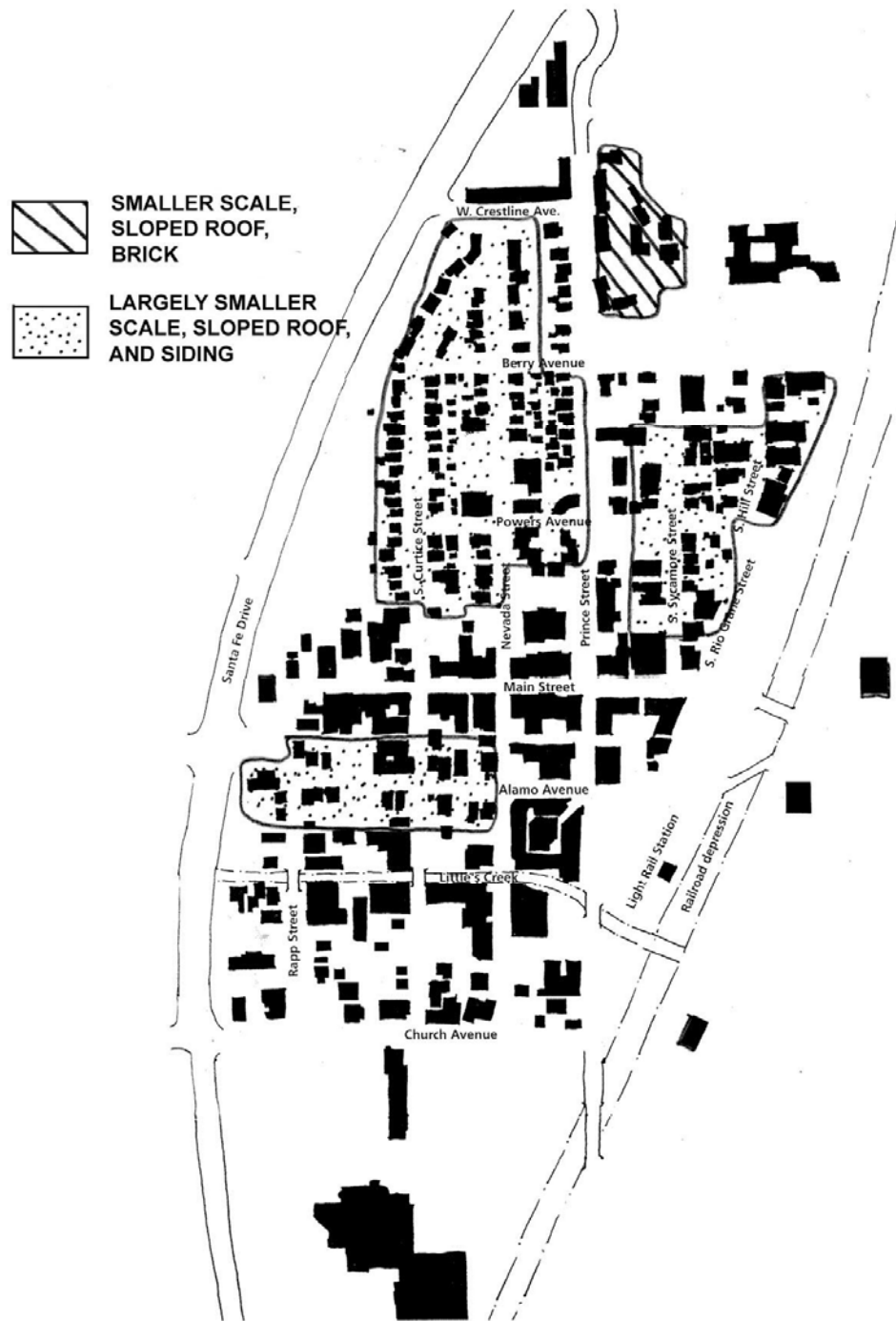


 Historic District

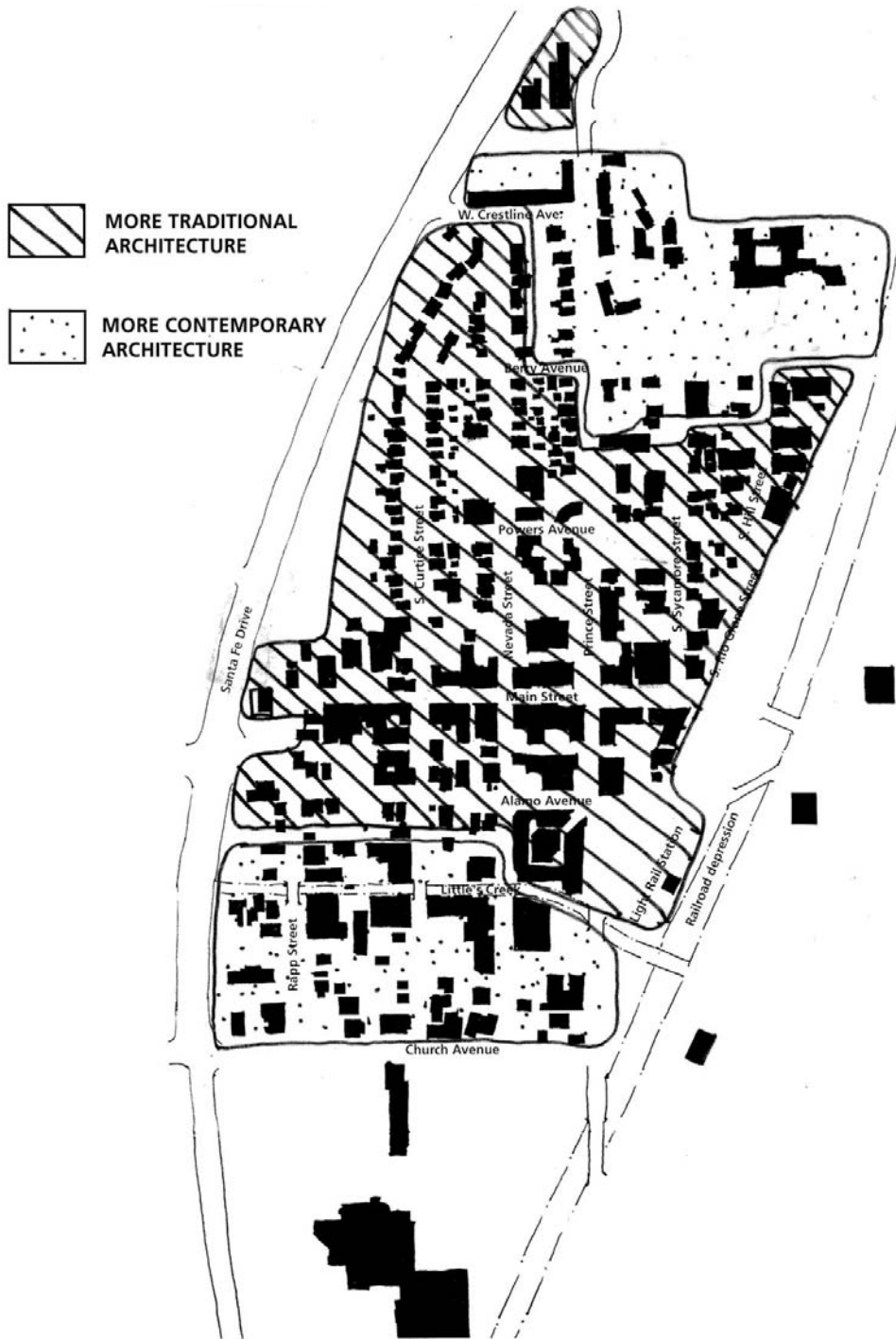
*Main Street Historic District Boundaries
Illustration I 2.1*



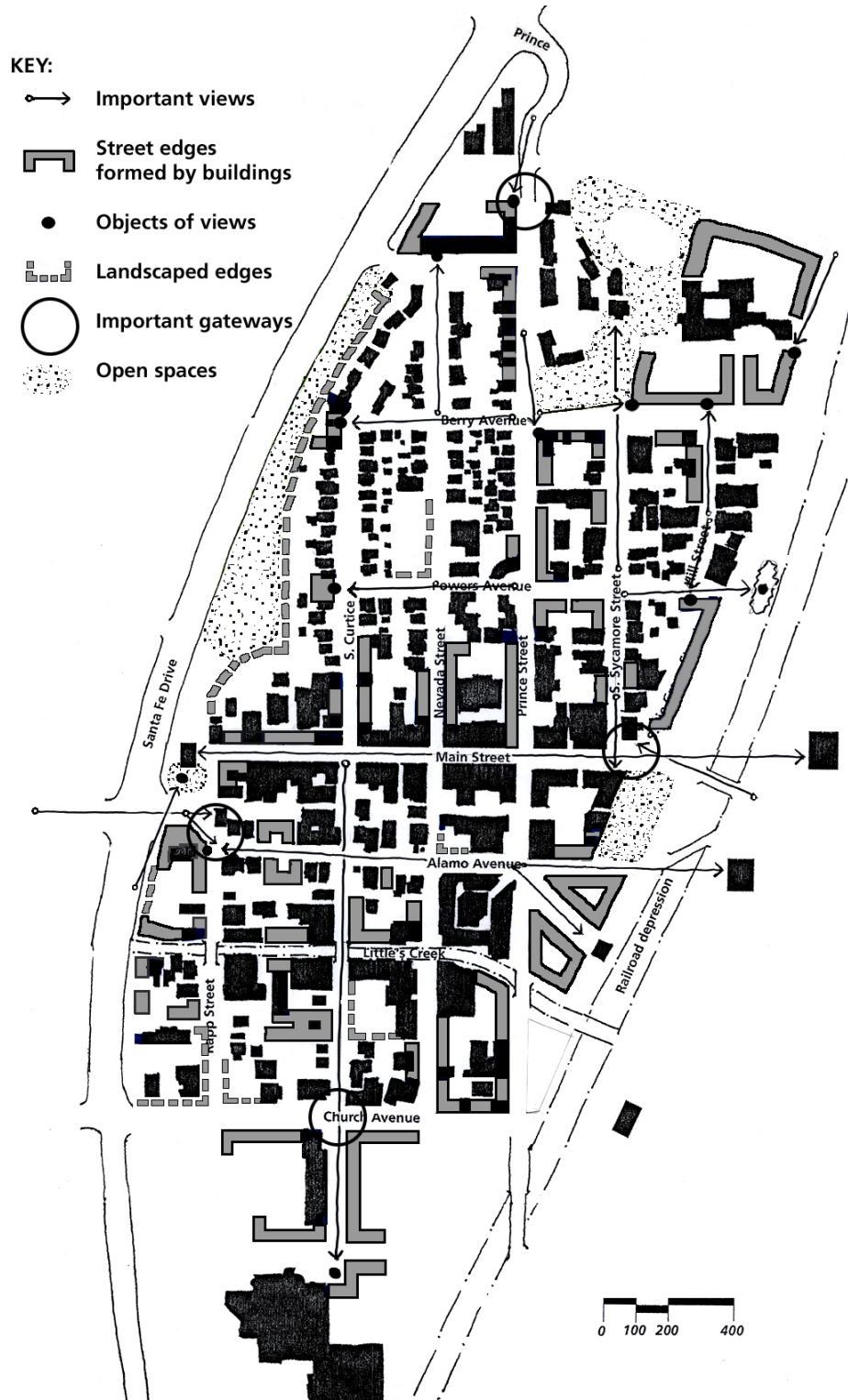
*Areas more commercial in character
Illustration I 7.1*



Areas more residential in character
Illustration I 7.2



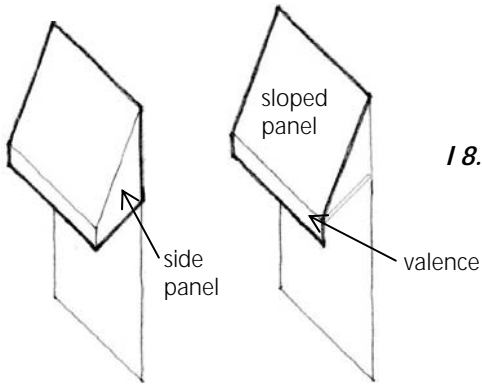
*Areas of differing architectural character
Illustration I 7.3*



*Overall urban design characteristics
Illustration I 7.4*

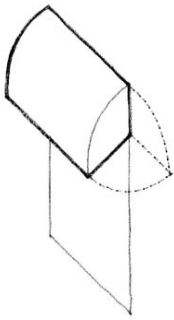
I 7.0 Overall downtown urban design characteristics

Illustrations I 7.1 through I 7.4 describe fundamental downtown form, material and building relationship characteristics, both existing and desired. These characteristics are the foundation for the individual subarea objectives, standards and guidelines. The illustrations also show an overall, generalized picture toward which the intent of the subarea standards and guidelines are directed. Although not in the scope of the standards and guidelines, one approach to physically linking the Arapahoe Community College to downtown along Curtice Street has also been shown.



8.1a

8.1b



8.1c



8.1d



8.1e

Awning types

Illustration 8.1

- a. sloped with side panels
- b. sloped with valence
- c. rounded
- d. gabled
- e. arched

I 8.0 Definitions

8.1 Awning types and components

Awnings may be retractable or fixed. See illustrations 8.1a-e.

8.2 Bay

A major facade module, usually related to a structural grid that is defined by building columns, piers, or other vertical elements. For the purposes of calculating the number of projecting signs, the minimum width of a bay shall be twenty (20) feet.

8.3 DRC

City of Littleton Development Review Committee

8.4 EIFS

An Exterior Insulating Finish System, commonly known as 'synthetic stucco', typically composed of an expanded polystyrene board substrate attached to an exterior wall and finished with a fiberglass mesh and resin coated surface. While relatively durable, such a system is susceptible to impact damage, water penetration, and fading of the color coat.

8.5 Facade

Any exterior building elevation, extending from grade to top of parapet or eave, and sometimes further identified as 'front', 'side', or 'rear'.

8.6 Guidelines (in the design standards and guidelines text)

Guidelines use the term "should" to denote that they are considered relevant to achieving the stated objective, and will be pertinent to the review process but will not be required for approval. The adherence to one or more guidelines may replace the adherence to a standard, at the discretion of the HPB or the DRC.

8.7 HPB

City of Littleton Historic Preservation Board

8.8 Main entry

An entry to a multistory building that serves the majority of the building above the ground floor. Unless the building has only one story, ground floor tenant entries

are not considered as main entries.

8.9 Objectives (in the design standards and guidelines text)

Objectives are provided to define goals which the standards and guidelines have been created to achieve. In circumstances where the appropriateness or applicability of a standard or guideline is in question or under negotiation, the objective will serve to provide additional direction.

8.10 Parking Lot

Any surface, or near surface, off-street area on private or public property not enclosed within a building where automobiles, vans, buses, trucks, or other vehicles are stored for short or long periods of times.

8.11 Pedestrian active uses

Uses which generate pedestrian traffic such as retail, eating places, personal services, banks, places of substantial employment population, residential, hotels, public offices, cinemas and other places of entertainment and/or recreation. Uses which are not considered to be pedestrian active uses are those which typically attract few shoppers or visitors, and/or which have few employees, such as warehouses and industrial uses. Parking garages are not considered to be pedestrian active uses by themselves.

8.12 Screen, screening

Architectural or landscape elements which substantially reduce the visual impact of the object(s) to be screened, or otherwise visually redefine, shape, or frame the object(s) to be screened into an architectural, landscape architectural or artistic composition. Screening does not mean that an object must be completely concealed from view unless expressly required in a standard or guideline.

8.13 Signable area

The facade area designated on a building's Sign Plan as being an appropriate location for wall, and projecting signs, and other specifically allowed signs.

8.14 Sign plan

A plan that shows the general location, type, number and size of anticipated signs for a building or buildings and its or their site or sites. At the time that the signs will actually be provided, the design of the signs shall be submitted to the DRC or the Historic Preservation Board and their location, type, number and size be reviewed for compliance with the approved Sign Plan. No building is exempt from providing a Sign Plan unless only address signage is contemplated.

8.15 Standards (in the design standards and guidelines text)

Design standards provide specific direction based on the stated intent. Standards use the terms “shall” to indicate that compliance is required unless it can be demonstrated that an acceptable alternative meets one or more of the following conditions:

- An alternative better achieves the stated intent;
- The objective which the standard was created to address will not be achieved by application of the standard in a particular circumstance;
- Unique site factors make the standard impractical or cost prohibitive;
- The DRC or the Historic Preservation Board determines that the greater public benefit is achieved if a standard is waived in return for the adherence to one or more guidelines.

8.16 *Street oriented facade*

A building facade that directly abuts or faces a street, with an intervening parking lot, set back, or open space, and is designed to include a ‘good’ to ‘high quality’ architectural expression, important entries, signs, and/or windows.

8.17 *Vehicle drop-off*

Any off-street area on private or public property where automobiles, vans, buses, trucks, or similar vehicles stop temporarily to drop off passengers or goods, but do not leave the vehicle unattended for longer than 30 minutes.