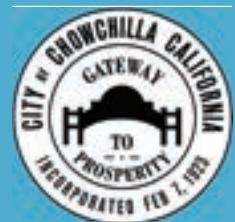




# DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

City of Chowchilla

*Adopted June, 2017  
Amended January, 2025*



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*Appendix A - Sample Parcel Studies*

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## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Chowchilla Downtown Design Guidelines are intended to be clear, concise, flexible, and to facilitate the timely approval of conforming projects. The intent of the document is to carry-out the objectives as defined in Section 1.2.

### ***1.1 - Background***

The community believes that supporting and enhancing the unique character of Downtown Chowchilla is essential. Property owners and developers will be expected to fit their new construction and renovation projects into the existing fabric with sensitivity to their surroundings, and a recognition that the sum of the whole is more important than any single building or use. The City of Chowchilla, through the efforts of community members, has enabled elected officials and City staff to prepare a plan that will serve and reflect the best interests of the community. Applicants are not required to meet all guidelines, but should be in substantial conformance with these design guidelines.

### ***1.2 - Purpose***

These guidelines are intended to create a positive impact on the physical appearance and function within the downtown core and to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Promote a refreshing and inviting atmosphere in which people live and conduct business, shop, and enjoy entertainment;

2. Create an identifiable sense of place, beauty, and comfort;
3. Enhance community pride;
4. Create an atmosphere that promotes and supports special events;
5. Appeal to a variety of age groups, incomes, and cultures;
6. Encourage creativity, architectural diversity, and exceptional design while recognizing the timeless character of existing buildings.



*Veterans Park is a popular location for downtown special events.*

### ***1.3 - Projects Subject to Review***

The Downtown Design Guidelines apply to projects located within the Downtown Core Boundary (see map on page 6). The guidelines are in addition to and subordinate to the zoning regulations. Full Zoning Code information for the downtown area can be found on the City's website.

These guidelines are applicable to all new development and improvement projects requiring a building permit, sign permit, and encroachment permit, or discretionary land use/zoning approvals. Guidelines that use the word "shall" means the guideline is required. Guidelines that use the word "should" means the guideline is preferred, encouraged, or recommended". The following project-types are subject to these guidelines and will be reviewed by the City of Chowchilla for compliance:

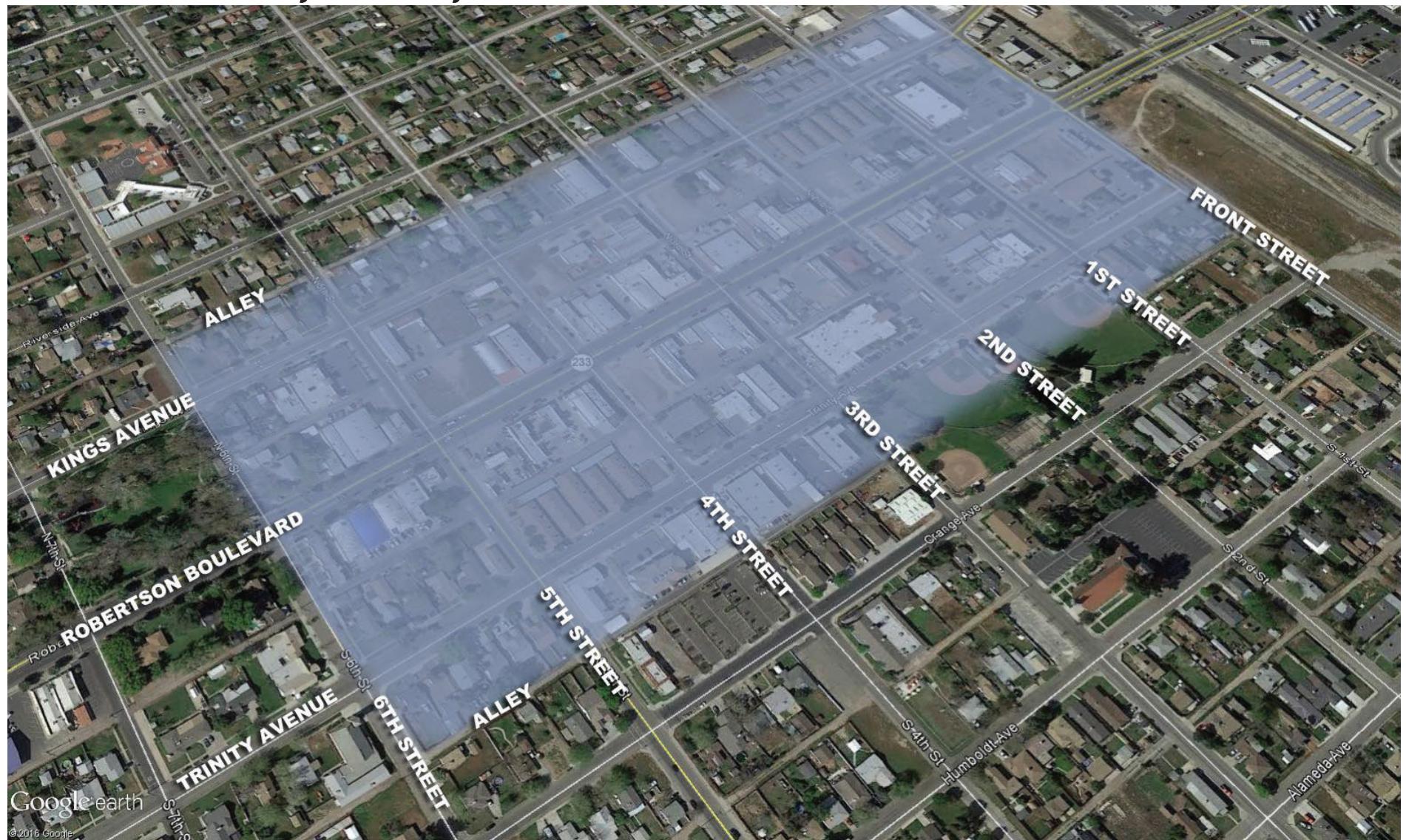
- New construction
- Additions to existing buildings
- Exterior facade changes
- New Signage

Any Development and improvements that are subject to the Downtown Design Guidelines, shall first seek approval from the Chowchilla Downtown Design Review Committee prior to making any modifications to the building.



*The mature palm trees along Robertson Boulevard are a familiar iconic symbol of Chowchilla.*

## 1.4 - Downtown Core Project Boundary



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## SECTION 2 - SITE PLANNING

### ***2.1 - Building Setbacks***

New buildings should be consistent with adjacent building setbacks. Buildings may be setback no more than ten (10') feet from the front property line and side property line to allow for outdoor dining, sale of flowers and produce, and planters and other landscape enhancements.

For buildings on corner lots, buildings are strongly encouraged to be placed on both the front and the side street corner property lines. The urban quality of the street and the pedestrian experience is enhanced by buildings located at the street edge. The only exception to allow building to be setback from the corner, would be to allow for a public gathering space at the corner of the property.

No off-street parking is allowed between the building and the street.

### ***2.2 - Building Spacing***

The placement of a building on its site should be in harmony with the spacing between other buildings along the street.

### ***2.3 - Sidewalks***

All sidewalks shall have a clear minimum four (4') feet width for unfettered pedestrian movement (six (6') feet minimum is preferred).

A portion of the sidewalk should include colored and stamped concrete along the curb and around the area for tree cut-outs at a minimum.

### ***2.4 - Crosswalks***

Provide visual clues to alert drivers that pedestrians have the right of way such as the following:

Provide special paving textures and/or colors for pedestrian crossings at intersections and parking areas. Use of Thermoplastic in crosswalks is preferred. Thermoplastic improves pedestrian safety at intersections and midblock crossings, is durable, and provides decorative enhancement to the streetscape.



*Use of Thermoplastic on crosswalks is encouraged like this one in Woodlake, CA.*

Provide special signage where driver visibility of crossing pedestrians might be limited.



*Use of special paving treatment on midblock crossings is encouraged.*

## **2.5 - Outdoor Gathering Areas**

Seek opportunities to incorporate public art into the public realm.

Street corners with buildings setback from street right of way or angled to allow for additional space can provide opportunities for public gathering.

The city could consider identifying opportunities for pocket parks, plazas, or mini-parks where possible.

## **2.6 - Outdoor Dining Areas**

Outdoor dining and operable windows are strongly encouraged for restaurants and cafes.

Outdoor dining areas may occur within the front setback of a site.

Seating in outdoor dining areas shall be located proximate to the dining establishment. Where seating is located within the public right of way, an encroachment agreement shall be required.

An enclosure wall, fence, or planter shall be required around any outdoor seating areas with restaurant table



*Street corners pose a great opportunity for a plaza or outdoor dining.*

service where alcohol is served, consistent with state licensing requirements. Walls, fences, and planters shall not exceed a maximum height of three and one-half feet (3.5').

Outdoor dining enclosures can be made of wood, or metal, and should attach to the sidewalk with recessed anchors – allowing for seasonal removal, leaving no tripping hazard in its absence.



*Bulb-outs can provide opportunities for an outdoor sitting or dining area.*

Outdoor dining enclosures can either be solid or semi-solid. Designs should be consistent with building façade design and/or restaurant theme.

Outdoor dining enclosures need to enclose the entire outdoor café area, leaving required exit width accommodations for occupancy of facility.

Take-out establishments, where food is purchased inside the building, may have unscreened outdoor dining areas,



*Narrow sidewalks can often provide enough space for both pedestrian movement and outdoor cafes.*

provided that 48" of clear space is maintained at all times for pedestrian movement. Street signage, furniture, and landscaping shall not encroach in this 48" clear space.

Tables and chairs can be of varying types, but those designed for exterior use are recommended.

Tabletop sunshades, umbrellas, pole shades and sunscreens are recommended. An umbrella diameter of between 4 and 5 foot is preferred.

Table layout of sidewalk cafes shall conform with all applicable building codes in regard to spacing, aisle width, occupancy, ADA and California Title 24.

Outdoor dining behind or to the side of a building is permitted. Outdoor spaces should be buffered from parking areas or drive aisles by low walls, landscaping or other features to clearly define the edges of the space. These outdoor spaces should be accessed from the building they serve.



*Example of outdoor dining with an acceptable style and height of fencing.*

## **2.7 - Outdoor Merchandising**

Although sidewalk displays add color and vitality to the street and pedestrian environment, they should be limited in application and use. Unless done carefully and in limited manner, sidewalk merchandising, within the downtown, could become contributors to sidewalk clutter.

Sidewalk displays for newspapers, flower and plant displays, bike rentals, and other small items or seasonal rentals should be removed and stored indoors overnight. Use of cardboard boxes and cartons is not acceptable.

Merchandise items displayed on the sidewalk shall relate specifically to the adjacent business and harmonize with items displayed in the storefront windows.

Sidewalk merchandise should not block views into the adjacent storefront windows.



*Outdoor displays of merchandise shall be kept to a minimum and must be moved indoors each day at close of business.*

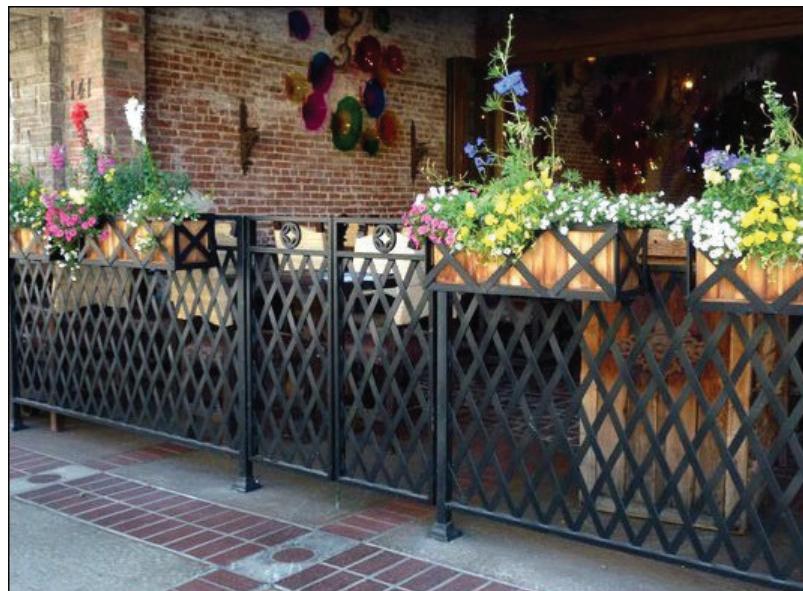
## **2.8 - Fencing and Railings**

Walled-off or fenced developments, defined as perimeter fencing around all or part of a development, are not allowed.

Chain-link, barbed-wire, or razor-wire fences are not allowed.

Fencing of quality, transparent material, such as wrought iron, no higher than six feet may be considered for private courtyards or greenspace. These applications will be

Railings for outdoor dining shall not extend into the Pedestrian Zone, shall have a maximum height of four feet, and shall be of a high quality, durable material.



*An appropriate use of fencing material and landscaping.*

## **2.9 - Trash Enclosures**

Locate and design trash enclosures to be inconspicuous and enhance the visual environment.

Trash enclosures should be placed to the rear of buildings or within a side parking lot and not visible from the street or a park. No trash enclosures may be located between the building and a street.

Trash enclosures shall be constructed to the minimum standards as identified in the City of Chowchilla Standard Specifications Book and Drawings; except that a metal swing gate is preferred to a chain link with slats. The metal gate should be primed, painted, and power coated to match the adjacent building main color or accent color.

Exposed concrete block should be avoided unless enhanced split face block textures and colors are utilized, block joints are visually minimized with colored mortar, and extensive vine landscaping is provided to soften the walls' appearance.

Consider integrating trash enclosures into the building or building design by matching building materials, details, and colors.

## **2.10 - Drive-Through Facilities**

Traditional drive-through facilities are strongly discouraged in the downtown area. Exceptions may be granted for bank drive-throughs. Non-traditional drive-throughs will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Driveways for drive-throughs are not permitted between the building and the street. Driveways located on the street side of corner lots may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.



*Example of an improved street with special paving, coordinated street furnishings and lighting, shade trees, bike lanes, outdoor dining, awnings, and frieze signs.*

## **2.11 - Outdoor Storage**

Storage areas should be integrated into the overall design of the building and shall not face or open onto the street. Exterior storage shall be confined in portions of the site least visible to public view.

## **2.12 - Bulb-outs**

A bulb-out is a part of the street curb that extends the sidewalk into the parking lane to narrow the roadway and provide additional pedestrian space at key locations. Bulb-outs have the added effect of calming traffic.



*Preferred use of bulb outs, signage, planters along Trinity Avenue and Kings Avenue.*



*Allowed: Example of bulb out with drought tolerant landscaping.*

Bulb-outs should be included with street improvements where possible.

Landscaping on bulb-outs shall not block views of motorists. Landscaping shall be maintained to a maximum height of three (3') feet.

## **2.13 - On Street Parking**

Standards for on-street parking shall comply with City Standards.

## 2.14 - Sidewalk Zones

**Frontage Zone:** The Frontage Zone is immediately adjacent to buildings, walls, fences or property lines fronting a street or public space. This zone typically includes planters, awnings, news racks, benches, and outdoor café seating.

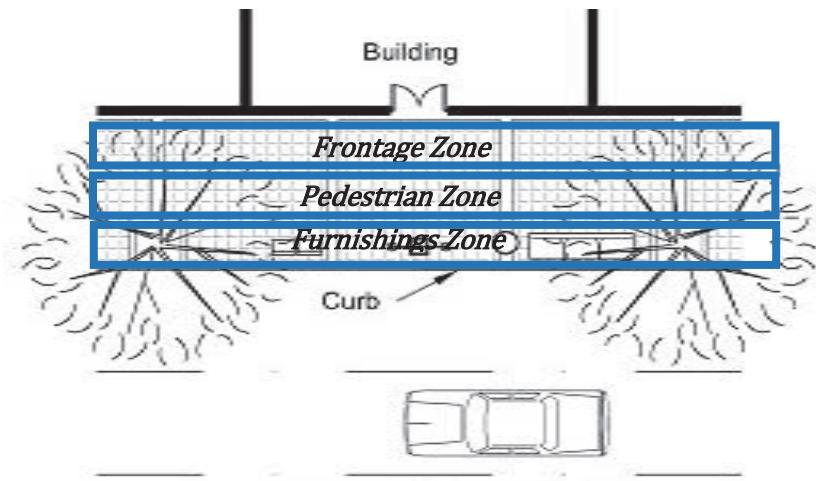
**Pedestrian Way:** The Pedestrian Way serves as the area dedicated to walking and shall be kept clear of all fixtures and obstructions. The clearance provided in the Pedestrian Way should generally be straight for the convenience of all pedestrians, but especially for the sight-impaired and those using a wheelchair. This zone is located between the Frontage Zone and the Furnishing Zone. The standard widths for the Pedestrian Way shall be a minimum of four (4') feet (six (6') feet preferred).

**Furnishing Zone:** The Furnishing Zone lies between the Pedestrian Way and the street. This zone includes street trees and lighting, parking and bus stop signs, bike and news racks, benches and bus shelters, trash receptacles, and outdoor seating depending on sidewalk width. Landscaping in cut-outs may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

**Sidewalk Treatment.** Brick pavers or stamped concrete should be used on all sidewalks.



*Tree wells and curb should be framed with special paving.*



*Example of sidewalk with acceptable use of special paving and shade trees.*

## SECTION 3 - CIRCULATION AND PARKING

### **3.1 - Driveways**

Whenever possible, locate vehicular entries to allow ingress and egress from streets other than Robertson Boulevard, Kings Avenue, and Trinity Avenue. Access and egress to parking lots should be located on alleys and side streets whenever possible. Side streets include Front Street and 1st to 6th Streets.

A maximum of one entrance/exit drive is allowed per parking lot per street. If a parking lot has alley access only, up to two accessways may be permitted.

### **3.2 - Parking**

No off-street parking is allowed between the building and the street.

Parking is permitted on the side of a building except on the street side of a building adjacent to a side street.

Pedestrian access to parking between buildings from street to rear of buildings is encouraged. Access should be a comfortable and pleasant experience. Blank walls are not permitted. Special paving and shade trees or structures are encouraged. The space should be a minimum of fifteen (15') feet and well lighted for safety and security.

Parking access points, whether located on front, side or alleys, shall be located as far as possible from the street intersections so that adequate stacking room is available.



*Example of an access from storefronts to rear parking.*

Where parking abuts the street edge, a minimum five (5') foot wide landscape buffer, hedge or wall should be provided. Screening and wall should be 36 inches in height. The landscaping may include groundcover, low shrubs, ornamental grasses, and perennials and annuals.

Parking lots shall provide areas for bicycle and motorcycle parking.

Reciprocal access easements should be obtained where possible to minimize ingress/egress along street frontage.

### **3.3 - Parking Lot Screening**

Screening at the periphery of all parking lots should be provided with a minimum 5' wide landscape area. A 36" high berm, headlight hedge, or masonry wall may be provided to screen any parking at the street periphery. A combination of walls, berms, and landscape material is highly recommended.

When walls are used to screen parking, breaks should be provided to allow pedestrian circulation and vehicular access, and the walls should be low enough for safety and security purposes. Walls shall be finished and designed to complement surrounding buildings.



*Example of mature landscaping to screen a parking lot.*

Landscaping within parking lots shall be given special consideration. These areas are typically located out of the public right-of-way and may contain different planting materials than the neighboring street. Refer to Zoning Ordinance for specific requirements. Avoid landscaping and other obstructions that could limit views of traffic and pedestrians at crossing points. Keep landscaping below driver eye height. Landscaped walkways give pedestrians a safe route to the building entrance.

All landscaped areas within a parking lot should be bordered by a concrete curb a minimum of six (6) inches high adjacent to the parking surface.

Chain link fencing, barbed wire, or razor wire are not allowed.



*A combination of a wall and drought tolerant landscaping to screen a parking lot.*

## SECTION 4 - ARCHITECTURE

### 4.1 - Character

Many of the structures within the Downtown core typify buildings constructed from the 1920's through the 1960's and through modernism typical of many Central Valley towns. Some buildings with contemporary architecture have been constructed recently. Within this area, all new construction, additions, and rehabilitation should reflect the architectural character of the original downtown buildings. New buildings should not necessarily copy the historic style, but should reflect the scale, materials, and details of the adjacent buildings.

Avoid architectural styles and monumental building elements that do not relate to the human scale of downtown Chowchilla.

Each building shall be designed to have a recognizable, base, middle, and top.

### 4.2 - Building Design

The following design element discussion has been separated into three sections: Building Base, Building Middle, and Building Top. Each section describes elements which support good design and provide visual references which identify both encouraged

and discouraged elements for the base, middle, and top portions of a building façade.

#### 4.2.1 - GENERAL

New and existing businesses are encouraged to develop the side and rear of buildings that face onto parking lots or alleys with pedestrian access, as building frontage. These



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facades should include display windows and business entrances if possible.

New buildings should respect the narrow widths of existing development (25 to 40 feet wide). New construction of buildings on lots wider than 40 feet should utilize architectural design elements that underscore the fine-grain character of Downtown through the following techniques:

Incorporate vertical and horizontal architectural elements to mitigate a long expanse of an unbroken building façade.

Break up long expanses of wall surfaces by varying building planes and grouping windows.

#### **4.2.2 - BASE**

Avoid blank walls along sidewalks.

Some may have wainscots (also known as knee walls) below display windows while others may have larger areas of glass extending to the floor. Wainscots are preferred. Wainscots should vary from 18" to 28" in height.

Encourage entry vestibules and allow ingress and egress to businesses without impeding pedestrian movement on adjacent sidewalks. Vestibules also allow for increasing display window exposure.

Use special paving materials and colors to clearly define the vestibule areas and separate them from the adjacent public sidewalk



##### ***Preferred wainscot, vestibule, awnings.***

Wainscots (also called knee walls) are encouraged to provide a strong base. They should be between 12 and 30 inches tall.

Design storefronts and building walls along pedestrian frontages to accommodate special paving and landscaping

Climbing vines and public art are encouraged for large blank walls to add texture and form.

## ***Windows***

Windows should be designed to encourage retail uses. Generally, a minimum of 60% of the building base should be windows (70% is preferred) because they enliven streets and provide interest and activity at the street.

Windows should be transparent, not opaque.

At the street level, windows should be treated with detail elements such as awnings, awning supports, framing and base colors and materials and glazing (mullions, sand blasting, etc.).

Reinforce the rhythm and scale on a building or row of buildings with symmetry and proportionality of openings (windows and doors). Windows on upper floors should reinforce the rhythm of upper story windows found on the local commercial buildings.

Windows and doors should be designed as accent elements with details such as lentils, awnings, moldings, and lights.

## ***Building Entrances/Doors***

The building entryway shall be designed as a significant aspect of the building's overall composition and shall be easily identifiable and accessible. Primary building entrances shall be clearly articulated using elements such

as awnings, canopies, recessed entry or other similar treatments. Recessed or projecting building entrances help to break up the building's mass and prevent a barracks-like façade.

Corner entrances for corner buildings are encouraged for strong visibility at the street intersection.

Doors to retail shops should include a high percentage of glass area.



*Preferred use of glass, transom windows, entry, and wainscot.*

At a minimum, store frontages and entrances shall include one or more of the following features: transparent display windows, recessed or accentuated entries, pedestrian oriented signs, and high quality construction materials. Other features that could be included are public art, custom entry tiles, canopies/awnings, outdoor dining areas, and movable landscaped containers and pots.

Upper floor entries at the street frontage shall have their own distinct design that complements the main building frontage and shall not appear tacked on to the exterior of the building.

#### **4.2.3 - MIDDLE**

Upper floors may be appropriate for varied setbacks to accommodate balconies, seating, and other architectural treatments.

##### ***Windows***

Windows should be in rhythm with the base level.

Visual interest should be created through sills, lintels, divided lights and style. Double-hung windows provide more visual interest than casement windows.

A minimum of 25% glass should be provided for each story above the ground floor.

Operable windows are encouraged for the upper floors of all downtown buildings.

#### **4.2.4 - TOP**

Distinctive cornices can create visual interest.

Parapets shall not appear “tacked on” and shall convey a sense of permanence.

New buildings should use rooflines that reflect the current historic character and context which may include the use of sloping roof forms as accents.



*Example of a flat roof with a desirable cornice/parapet.*

Multi-form roofs, gabled and shed roof combinations are encouraged to create an interesting and varying roof form that will lessen the mass of the building, and add visual appeal.

Parapets should have sufficient articulation of detail such as precast treatments, continuous banding or projecting cornices, lentils, caps, corner details, or variety in pitch.

#### **4.2.5 - ROOF**

Roof shape and roofing materials should be harmonious with existing buildings and overall building design.

Flat roofs with a parapet wall are strongly encouraged. Hip roofs and gable roofs are acceptable.

Mansard-style roofs shall be eliminated as buildings redevelop.

Roof materials and colors are important aspects of the overall building design and they shall be consistent with the desired architecture and should be complementary to adjacent structures.

Roof forms such as gable and hip with a relatively shallow pitch characterize temperate areas like Chowchilla, Merced, and surrounding communities with a slope of less than 8:12 and greater than 4:12 are visually and functionally more appropriate to the downtown's character.

If solar panels are used, they should be integrated into the roof design. Solar panels placed on sloped roofs should be parallel to and resting on the roof slope. If visible from the street, solar panel frames shall coordinate with roof colors.

The following roofing materials are permitted:

- Composite shingles
- Metal roofing
- Clay tiles
- Concrete tiles/fiber cement shingle panels
- Cool Roof: built-up roofing (BUR)

#### **4.3 - Corner Buildings**

Prominent architectural features such as clock towers, turrets, marquees, and building entries should be located at and oriented to the street corners and intersections.

Building entries are encouraged to be located at and oriented to the corner of corner buildings.



*Preferred architectural treatment on corner building.*

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## **4.4 - Materials**

### **4.4.1 - PERMITTED**

Materials should be used to differentiate between the importance of building features, and provide visual separations between material functions.

The list of approved exterior building materials is as follows:

- Brick masonry or cut stone
- Natural and textured cast stone
- Concrete masonry with integral color and texture (such as split rock faced concrete block) or with exterior surfaces that have been treated with a decorative applied, surface texture and color other than paint
- Cast-in-place concrete or pre-cast concrete panels. If concrete wall panels are used, create a unified and high-quality appearance, minimizing the appearance of joint lines
- Wood, provided the surfaces are finished for exterior use or wood of proven exterior durability if used, such as cedar, redwood, or cypress
- Concrete composite board
- Clear glass

- Smooth and hand troweled stucco
- Exterior Insulated Finishing Systems (EIFS) where the EIFS system is manufactured to replicate the look of approved building materials
- Ceramic tiles in limited use, but acceptable on wainscot (base) of building
- Plaster or cast stone cornices are acceptable

Materials permitted on the roof include the following:

- Fire treated shingles
- Barrel, "S" or flat concrete or clay tile
- Slate or slate appearing roofing
- Class A composition roofing
- Copper roofing is permitted in limited quantities such as on a bay window or over a doorway

Utilize natural materials. Wood, stone, and brick can provide warmth at storefronts, and enhance the feeling of village scale and character.

### **4.4.2 - Not PERMITTED**

The following materials are prohibited in any portion of a building:

- fiberglass or plastic stone or masonry

- corrugated fiberglass, heavy or rough textured stucco (such as “heavy lace” or “heavy dash”)
- concrete masonry units
- pecky cedar
- imitation wood or T-111 plywood siding
- highly reflective or tinted opaque glass
- Highly polished materials
- Metal siding
- Cedar shakes are not permitted as either siding or roofing material

## ***4.5 - Colors***

The appropriateness of any given color for a particular building depends on a number of factors, including, architectural style, building material, building features and details, building size, and building context (with adjacent buildings).

Subtle, neutral colors such as off-white, ivory, beige, light mocha, warm gray, and taupe are also acceptable (see Appendix B for examples).

No more than five colors should be used on any given facade, including “natural” colors such as unpainted brick or stone.

Encourage contrasting colors which accent architectural details.

Encourage colors which accent entrances.

Avoid using colors that are not harmonious with colors found on adjacent buildings.

Finish material with “natural” materials such as brick, stone, copper, etc., should be used where practicable.

## ***4.6 - Awnings and Canopies***

See Appendix - B

Awning design at both the first floor and upper floors should be sensitive to the overall façade of the building. The size, scale, and color of the awning should be compatible with the remainder of the building. Awnings should not be the dominate element of a façade. Partitioning an awning at the vertical divisions of a building, such as a break between the display windows and the entrance or within the masonry or frame openings of windows or doors, is encouraged. Awnings should not cover an important design element or historic character-defining element of a building. Awnings at all floor levels should extend from the building in either a straight line or in a rounded form.

Awnings should add color, forms, relief, and pedestrian protection from the elements. They may also be used for business identification signage.

The shape, design, and color of awnings should be carefully designed to coordinate with, and not dominate, the architectural style of the building.

Awnings at the ground floor level shall not project more than 6 feet from the face of a building. A valance portion of an awning may extend down to not less than seven (7) feet above the adjacent sidewalk or finished grade.

Awnings should be either treated weather-durable canvas such as woven canvas or acrylic coated canvas. A fire-retardant coating is recommended. Aluminum awnings are discouraged but may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

Backlit and internally illuminated awnings and canopies are not appropriate.

Awnings shall be maintained on a regular basis and replaced when appropriate.

Canopies are shade structures that are permanently mounted to and extend horizontally from the face of a building. Canopies are a common design element on many existing buildings in the Chowchilla downtown core.

Canopies should have a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet above the adjacent sidewalk or finished grade.

On canopies, signs can be mounted above, applied to, or cut into the fascia or front of the canopy. Signs on canopies are typically not illuminated, except for signs cut into the fascia. In this case, they are usually backlit with fluorescent light.

Where buildings are located adjacent to the sidewalk or other pedestrian space, awnings and overhangs should be used to create comfortable walking areas for pedestrians.

## ***4.7 - Lighting***

Lighting is a critical element in storefront design, enhancing the storefront's visual appeal and creating a sense of safety and security for pedestrians, customers, and store owners.

### ***4.7.1 - STREET, WALKWAY, AND PARKING LOT LIGHTING***

The historic Chowchilla Electrolier is to be used for free standing pedestrian lighting. The design of parking lot lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the overall design theme used in the development.

Walkway light fixtures should not exceed a height of twelve (12) feet and spaced to allow for adequate safety and security.

All lighting shall be shielded so as not to spill over directly onto neighboring properties or interfere with traffic safety.

### ***4.7.2 - FAÇADE LIGHTING***

The use of decorative façade lighting is strongly encouraged to add to the downtown's sense of vitality and



*Chowchilla Electrolier  
Lighting.*

safety, and can encourage window shopping during the evening hours.

Decorative lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the architectural style of the building and storefront.

Lighting shall be designed in a manner to avoid disturbances and glare onto adjacent properties and passing vehicles.

Security lighting fixtures shall not project above the fascia or roofline of the building and are to be shielded. The shield shall be painted to match the surface to which it is attached.

Building-mounted lighting on facades or other accent lighting on architectural features is encouraged.

#### **4.8 - Mechanical Equipment**

Rooftop equipment on flat roofs shall be screened and not visible from ground level. Buildings with flat or low-pitched roofs shall incorporate parapets, pitched facades, or architectural elements designed to screen roof mounted mechanical equipment and to be architecturally compatible with the design of the building façade.



Any mechanical equipment located on the side or rear of a structure, or on the ground shall be appropriately screened from view. The method of screening shall be architecturally integrated with the adjacent structure in terms of materials, color, shape and size or screened with an evergreen hedge.

#### **4.9 - Historical Integrity**

Preserve historically significant structures, whenever possible. Refer to the City's most recent Historical Survey for an inventory of historically significant properties in the Downtown area.

Preserve worthy elements of the existing buildings. Recycle and reuse distinctive design elements

Where buildings were once architecturally distinctive but have been altered over time, restore the lost integrity of form and details, if possible.

All new infill buildings and remodels in the downtown core shall give careful consideration to adjacent building conditions and their historic architectural features and scale. Buildings shall be sited and designed to reinforce the scale, massing, and rhythm of adjoining facades.

Each project is encouraged to have a unique identify but should integrate appropriate design elements from adjacent structures such as materials, roof forms, window treatments, and architectural style. Building heights shall vary from building to building.

#### **4.10 - Residential Buildings – Single Family**

Conversion of single family residences to office, stores, shops, or restaurants is permitted. When existing buildings that have historically been used as residences are converted to nonresidential uses, the guidelines of this manual are encouraged.

For existing residences, exterior alterations or additions will be permitted and provided that the changes enhance or upgrade the property.

Exterior modifications to buildings shall be minimized to the extent possible.

Buildings with existing front and/or side yard covered porches and handrails that are indicative of the architectural style shall remain and be improved.

Parking shall be located in the rear of the lot. Parking shall not be allowed in the front or corner side setback areas of a corner lot.

Parking shall only be accessed from the alley.

#### **4.11 - Corporate Prototypes**

Corporate “chain” style architecture should be avoided in the Downtown Core as it detracts from the historic feel of Chowchilla and detracts from the character of surrounding buildings. Corporate tenants will be requested to design their buildings to fit the scale and character of the Downtown Core. The architecture should consider compatibility with surrounding character, including

harmonious building style, form, size, color, material, and rooflines. It is encouraged that corporate prototype designs relate both in form and scale to the adjacent downtown fabric.

The use of standardized “corporate” architectural styles associated with chain-type facilities is acceptable provided the design complies with these guidelines and other requirements of the zoning ordinance. The designer/architect is expected to employ variations in form, building details, and siting to create visual interest. In all cases, the chosen architectural style should be employed on all building elevations visible to the public.



*Corporate “Chain” style businesses will work with City staff to conform to the Downtown Design Guidelines.*

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## SECTION 5 - LANDSCAPING

One of the objectives of the downtown district is to incorporate sidewalk landscaping which will promote a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. When pedestrians experience a welcoming atmosphere and are encouraged to walk along the store frontages, more local businesses will benefit due to the increased foot traffic. The streetscape design shall also incorporate planter boxes, tree wells, park-style benches, and ornamental trash containers.

Landscaping may occur in a variety of forms along the building facade. Flowers are strongly encouraged to add color and interest.

The following streets required to install street trees spaced approximately 25 feet to 40 feet. Trees shall not interfere with nearby street lighting. The following streets shall include street trees.

- Robertson from Front Street to 6th Street
- Trinity Avenue from Front Street to 6th Street
- Kings Avenue from Front Street to 6th Street
- Front Street, 1st Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, 4th Street, 5th Street, and 6th Street from alley west of Kings Avenue to alley east of Trinity Avenue

### ***5.1 - Preferred Street Trees***

The following selection of preferred street trees is based on their ability to survive in urban conditions, tolerance to drought, lack a shallow root system that could undermine sidewalks, and provide adequate shade for the central valley summer. Other trees may be considered if the following are trees are unavailable.

- *Cercis occidentalis* – Western Redbud
- *Laurus nobilis* – Sweet Bay
- *Pistacia Chinensis* – Chinese Pistache
- *Quercus suber* – Cork Oak
- *Quercus rubra* – Red Oak
- *Quercus wislizeni* – Interior Live Oak
- *Zelkova serrata* – Sawleaf Zelkova

Images of the preferred trees are located on page 26.

### ***5.2 - Street Tree Standards***

Street trees shall be located in the Furnishings Zone next to the street.

Street trees shall be selected from the preferred list of trees identified within this Section.

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Permanent irrigation shall be provided to ensure the life of the tree.

Trees shall be kept pruned to a clearance height of seven (7') except for newly planted young trees.

Trees shall be a minimum of 2-1/2" to 3" caliper. Four (4") or larger caliper is encouraged.

Spacing distance between street trees is a minimum of 25 feet and a maximum of 40 feet. Exceptions may be made to accommodate curb cuts, driveways, fire hydrants, awnings, street lighting, and fixed infrastructure elements. Actual spacing may be determined at preliminary site plan submittal.

### **5.3 - Tree Wells**

Trees planted in sidewalks are required to be installed within a 60" square common or paving brick planter as identified in the City of Chowchilla Standard Specifications Book and Drawings.



*Stamped concrete paving along a tree planter on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.*



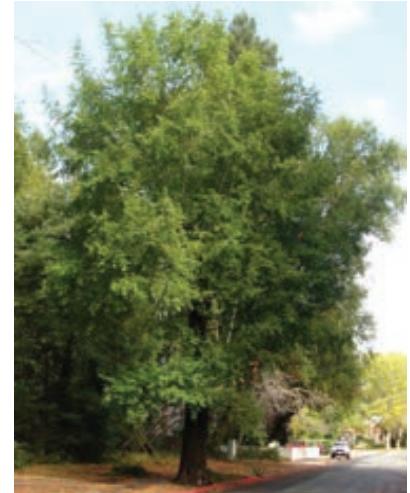
**Quercus rubra** – Red Oak



**Cercis occidentalis** – Western Redbud



**Laurus nobilis** – Sweet Bay



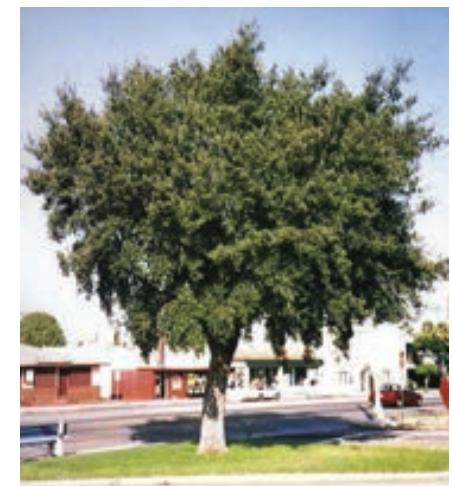
**Quercus suber** – Cork Oak



**Pistache chinensis** – Chinese Pistache



**Zelkova serrata** – Japanese zelkova



**Quercus wislizeni** – Interior Live Oak

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## SECTION 6 - STREET FURNITURE

The City of Chowchilla currently uses a standard selection of street furniture throughout the city parks such as the R. C. Wisener Community Park, Veterans Memorial Park, and the Sports and Leisure Park. The furniture uses recycled plastic for durability and sustainability. A consistent theme of street furnishings should be incorporated for sidewalks, plazas, sitting areas, and other downtown publicly accessible environments.

### ***6.1 - Benches***

All new benches shall conform to the City of Chowchilla standards.

### ***6.2 - Trash Receptacles***

All new trash receptacles shall conform to the City of Chowchilla standards.

### ***6.3 - Bicycle Racks***

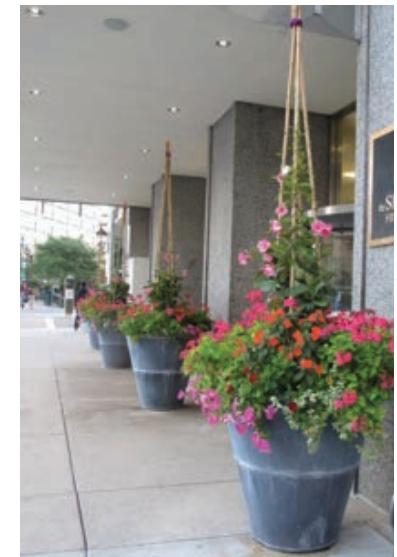
All new bicycle racks shall conform to the City of Chowchilla standards.

### ***6.4 - Planter Urns & Planter Pots***

Urns and pots provide a place for special annual color and reinforce a more pleasant urban environment. Planter urns and pots should incorporate the architectural character and scale of the building they are placed adjacent to. Property owners shall be prepared to maintain and water urns and pots as necessary.

Pots may be located in the following places, as long as adequate pedestrian movement is maintained:

- Frontage Zone
- Furnishings Zone
- Bulb-outs (as long as plantings do not exceed a height of 30")



## 6.5 - Kiosks & Wayfinding Signage

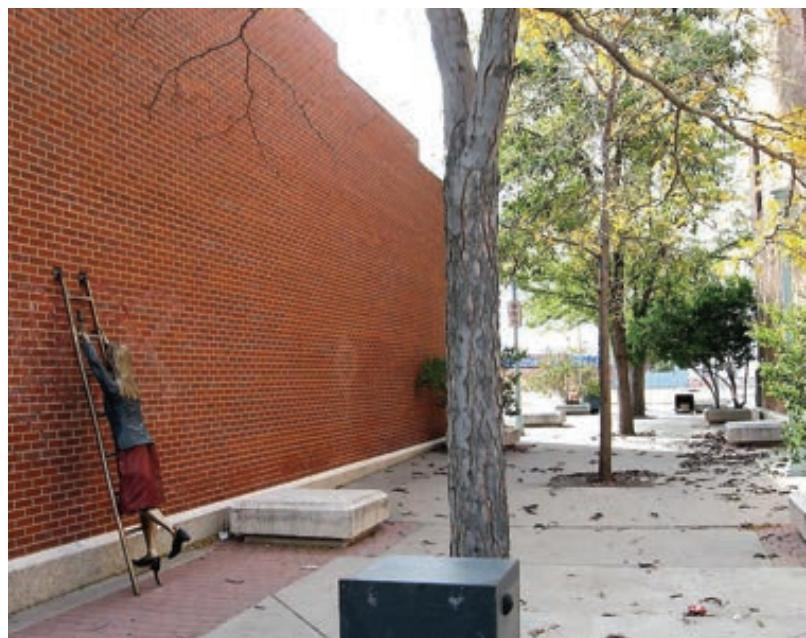
Kiosks and wayfinding signage help to direct people around the city. Wayfinding signage, complete with maps and 'you are here' icons, should be placed at key intersections to help locals and tourists navigate their way around the downtown. These signs can draw attention to areas of historic, cultural, and recreational significance as well as shopping, restaurants, and other destinations.



*Preferred examples of a kiosk, information sign, and complementary themed street name signs.*

All signs, including street names, should complement the overall theme of the downtown core.

## 6.6 - Public Art



*Art should be considered along connections from front of buildings to parking lots.*

Public art is exactly that, art in public spaces. The term "public art" may conjure images of historic bronze statues of a soldier on horseback in a park. Today, public art can take a wide range of forms, sizes, and scales—and can be temporary or permanent. Public art can include murals, sculptures, memorials, integrated architectural or landscape architectural work, community art, banners, digital new media, and even performances and festivals. The arts are playing an increasingly important role in stimulating the local economies of small towns and rural communities.

The City should seek opportunities to fund public art.

Develop a public arts program and public art advisory committee.

Seek funding through grant programs such as National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and California Arts Council.

Memorial benches, memorial plaques, engraved brick pavers, and commemorative trees are ways for the community and businesses to fund local art.



*Example of engraved pavers.*

## **6.7 - Utility Boxes**

Utility boxes, pedestals and meter panels shall be painted to blend in with surroundings. All utility boxes and meter

panels on walls shall be painted to match the building walls with utility company approvals.

The utility boxes in Chowchilla are undiscovered canvases for individuals with the imagination to cover them with their artwork. Public art creates and enhances community identity and enhances the visual landscape and character of the city. Consider a public art program or get local schools involved.



*Utility boxes can be a convenient and visible place for public art on the sidewalk.*

## SECTION 7 - SIGNS

More than perhaps any other storefront component, signs provide an opportunity for whimsy, creativity, identity, and expression that respects the building to which the signage is attached and the flavor of the downtown core. The



*Acceptable locations for storefront signs.*

storefronts/building facades in downtown Chowchilla offer several sign placement options to local businesses. Signs work well on sign bands spanning the top of a storefront opening, above the ground floor or transom windows; on awnings; on display windows; projecting from the building; or above the entry.

Select signs appropriate to the pedestrian scale environment of the Downtown Core District. Select and scale signs that are oriented to pedestrians rather than to passing motorists. Sign types that are most likely to be successful and approved are the following:

- Wall Signs or Frieze Signs
- Projecting Signs
- Awning Signs
- Hanging Signs
- Window Signs
- Plaque Signs
- Awning Signs
- A-Frame Signs
- Trademark or Corporate Signs
- Monument Signs

Monument signs will be approved on residential conversions. Monument signs are discouraged at all other locations. Corporate tenants may be permitted monument signs on a case-by-case basis but shall adapt their monument signs to fit the character of downtown Chowchilla.

The sign regulations are identified in sections 15.20 and 18.66.160, Outdoor Advertising, of the City's Municipal Code and shall be adhered to at all times.



*Acceptable locations for storefront wall or frieze signs.*

## **7.1 - Wall or Frieze Sign**

The frieze above a storefront's transom and storefront windows is one of the most common and preferred location for business signs. Illumination of frieze mounted signs or spot lit external incandescent or halogen lighting.

The total area of all on-premise wall signs, roof signs, projecting signs and under marquee or under awning/canopy signs should not exceed ten per cent (10%) of the total area of the wall or façade upon which they are mounted or attached, but need not be less than forty (40) square feet nor greater than 100 square feet.

If individual freestanding or channel letters are used, they may be individually lit or backlit. Internally illuminated box signs are inappropriate.



*Example of preferred wall or frieze sign, awnings, ground floor windows, and second story windows in Hanford, CA.*

## **7.2 - Projecting Signs**

Projecting signs are relatively flat, two-sided solid panels attached to brackets which are mounted on and perpendicular to the face of the buildings and storefronts. In addition to text, they may include graphic images that express the unique personality of an individual business.

Use high quality materials such as wood, metal, aluminum or high density urethane (HDU) for projecting signs. Plastic signs should be avoided.

No more than one projecting sign per business frontage is permitted.

For signs with eight to sixteen feet clearance above the adjacent sidewalk, a projection of one foot plus 6" for each foot of clearance in excess of eight (8) feet is permitted. The sign shall provide at least six (6) inches between the face of the building and the edge of the sign.

For signs with a minimum of sixteen (16) foot clearance above the adjacent sidewalk, a projection of not more than five (5) feet from the face of the building is permitted. The sign shall provide at least six (6) inches between the face of the building and the edge of the sign.

Projecting signs should relate to the nature of the business and the architectural character of the building.

Projecting signs may be lit using high quality fixtures such as cylinder spots or decorative fixtures. Avoid exposed standard spots and flood light bulbs. Design light supports to complement the design of the sign and the building façade.

Projecting signs on adjacent businesses may not be spaced any closer than twelve (12) feet.

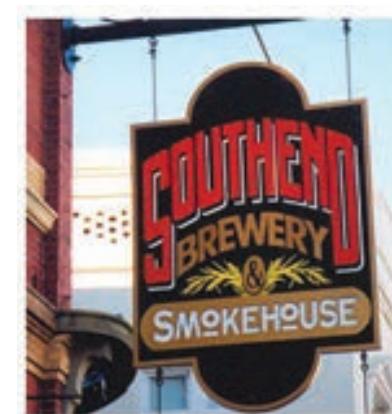
Double-faced projecting signs shall not extend more than three feet above the wall, façade, parapet or eave of the building on which they are attached.

### **7.3 - Hanging Signs**

Hanging signs are relatively flat panels, often two-sided, and similar to projecting signs, but are smaller and suspended below awnings, balconies, arcades, and similar projections. They are intended primarily for business identification to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk, not for moving vehicles.



*Permitted: Hanging Signs.*



*Permitted: HDU Signs Can Be Colorful and Durable.*



Finish all exposed edges. Suspend signs with metal rods, small scale chain, cable or hooks.

Use no more than one hanging sign per business. Limit the maximum sign size to three (3 SF) square feet. Mount signs to provide a minimum of eight (8) feet clearance between the sign and the sidewalk.

***Permitted: Hanging Signs.***

Mount signs under awnings, balconies, arcades, and similar projections with their orientation perpendicular to the face of building so that they will be visible to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk. If hanging multiple signs for businesses are placed along a building frontage, they should all be mounted with their bottom edge the same distance above the sidewalk.

## **7.4 - Window Signs**

Window signs are intended to identify a business by name and may include additional information, such as hours of operation or a proprietor's name. Temporary signs, and signs incorporated into window displays, are not considered permanent window signs.



*Example of preferred window signage.*

If no other business identification sign exists, permanent window signs may occupy up to 25% of the window area.

If used in conjunction with a wall sign, canopy sign, or projecting sign, permanent window signs are limited to 10% of window area. Sign copy shall be limited to two (2) feet in height and two (2) feet in width maximum, if used in conjunction with a wall sign.



*Example of preferred window signage.*

Second-story window signs representing not more than 20% of window area, are permitted if the use differs from the first story.

Permanent window signs should be limited to individual letters placed on the interior surface of the window and intended to be viewed from outside. Glass-mounted graphics may be applied by silk-screening or pre-spaced vinyl die cut forms.

It is preferred that the text or sign copy of a window sign should be limited to the business name, proprietor's name, hours of operation, and brief messages identifying the type of product or service (e.g., "TOYS" or "ATTORNEY"), or pertinent information (e.g., "SE HABLA ESPANOL" or

"RESERVATIONS REQUIRED"). Letter size for all information, other than the business name, shall be limited to a maximum height of two (2) inches.

### **7.5 - Plaque Signs**

Plaque signs are pedestrian-oriented flat panels mounted to wall surfaces near business entries, upper floor entries, and courtyards. They include signs that identify a specific business, directory signs for multiple businesses, and menu display boxes for restaurants.

Locate plaque signs only on wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entries or entry passageways to off-street courtyards (i.e., parking lot at rear of building).

Use plaque signs for the display of restaurant menus. A restaurant. Menus placed on attractive menu boxes with internal indirect lighting (located in the frame) are preferred. Direct lighting using decorative fixtures is also permitted.



## 7.6 - Awning Signs

Awning signs are painted or affixed to the vertical or sloped face of an awning.

Awning signs are limited to awnings covering one entrance per each street or alley that the building faces. The business name or building name portion of the sign is limited to 40% of the awning face.



*Example of preferred awning sign.*

It is preferred that sign copy text may be the name of the business and/or the business logo.



*Permitted: Rose Furniture Canopy Sign.*

## 7.7 - A-Frame Signs

Freestanding sidewalk signs shall be constructed of durable materials, sufficient to withstand inclement weather, as well as color fading due to sunlight. Metal, wood, and plastic are typical materials used. Glass and other breakable materials are not allowed.

Portable A-frame signs shall be designed to be self-supporting.

Signs shall be weighted to withstand wind or being overturned by contact. Weights, if required, should be incorporated in the sign construction, not applied.

Signs, shall be no more than 3'-6' high, 2'-6" width, and 2'-0" base width. Each face should contain no more than 7.5 square feet of sign area.

The sign shall not be placed on the sidewalk in such a manner as to obstruct public access, including ADA accessibility requirements.



*Example of preferred A-frame signs in Visalia*

## ***7.8 - Trademark or Corporate Signs***

It is preferred that registered trademarks, portrayal of specific commodities or signs advertising brands not exceed 20% of the total sign area. If the trademark represents the principal activity conducted, an increase in area is acceptable.

## ***7.9 - Lighting of Signs***

Lighting sources should be external, shielded, and directed only at the sign. Internal illumination is acceptable only when the letters and/or logo, not the background, are lit.



*Appropriate use of illumination.*

## ***7.10 - Monument Signs***

Monument signs are freestanding and are located adjacent to sidewalks. Such signs are typically used for buildings that are separated from adjacent streets by substantial setbacks.

A monument sign shall be set onto a base or frame, presenting a solid, attractive and well-proportioned appearance that complements the building design and materials.

Locate monument signs in landscaped areas and/or provide landscaping around the sign.

Maximum area: 60 square feet per sign face with no more than two sign faces.

Minimum setback from the public right-of-way: 5 feet.

Material: Opaque backgrounds with a nonreflective material.

Lighting: External lighting fixtures designed to complement the appearance of the sign or internal lighting that only illuminates text and logos.

Maximum height: 8 feet, including base.

Text: Limited to the building or development name, logo, and the business address.

Background: Opaque and non-reflective.

## ***7.11 - Prohibited Signs***

The following signs are not permitted in the downtown core:

- Roof signs
- Revolving signs
- Projecting signs above the canopy except for vintage signs that are a component of the existing architecture
- Pole or pylon signs
- Internally illuminated cabinet or box signs

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- Internally illuminated awnings or canopies
- Off-premises advertising
- Signs that utilize mirrors or other reflective surfaces which may disorient or cause a safety concern or the use of aluminum foil wraps.
- Signs using blinking, flashing, vibrating, flickering, tracer or sequential lighting techniques.
- Signs advertising a product or service not sold or provided on the premises the sign is located or directing the public to other locations.
- Inflatable figures or oversized balloon type ads or promotions.
- Marking or painting of public sidewalks in an effort to create signs or marketing or directional information to attract business traffic.
- Use of poorly hand lettered paper or cardboard signs taped onto windows or doors, other than grocer type posters which may be utilized where signs are professionally lettered and displayed in an orderly manner.
- Portable signs on wheeled wagons or carts are not acceptable.
- Changeable lettering systems, utilizing individual letters, may only be located within designated marquee areas, or as otherwise approved by review of the City of Chowchilla.
- Any sign which, in the judgment of the Chowchilla Police Department or in the opinion of the Community Development Director, constitutes a traffic hazard.
- Signs using red, green or amber lamping placed within 100 feet of any traffic control or signal device.
- Signs using words such as "STOP", "DANGER", "LOOK", or other similar terms which are placed in a manner or position which may misinform, misguide or potentially confuse the public.
- Any new signs not in compliance with the design criteria as set forth in the design guidelines or local zoning regulations.

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## APPENDICES



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## ***APPENDIX A – Sample Parcel Studies***

The following images represent 3D graphic examples of the results these design guidelines, if incorporated properly, can create.





# City of Chowchilla Architectural Color Guide

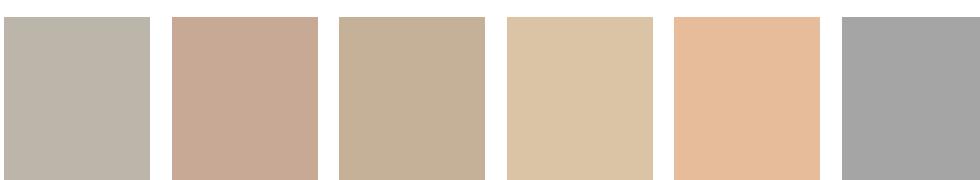
## Primary Building Mass: Large Scale Buildings



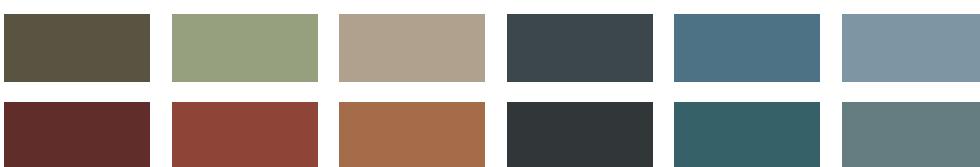
## Secondary Building Mass: Small Scale Buildings



## Smaller Masses & Accents: Bases, Bands, Trim



## Trim & Details: Emphasizing Variation



## Awnings & Umbrellas

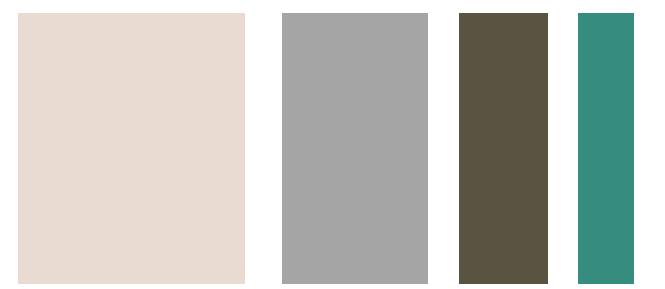


## Example of Combinations

### Example 1



### Example 2



### Example 3

