

Thanks for the opportunity to review this latest draft of the University Place Design Standards. Below are comments addressing specific sections or pages of the standards.

Design Criteria: Street Frontages

1. Page 22-Internal Main Street Driveway: In the “Streetscape” section, “Outdoor Amenity Space”, the passage states “min, if provided: 10 feet”. This will be a key public space for enhancing the character of the town center, and will be a space with a community focus as well. While recognizing that the exact size, configuration, and character of the space will be determined in the future according to development conditions, it is recommended to remove the words “if provided” to reinforce the understanding that some kind of public amenity space will be provided. Also, the noted 10’ minimum width is very narrow, not allowing for much of any useful space. Suggest increasing to 20’, with flexibility for alternatives per staff review and approval.
2. Page 23-5. Internal Typical Driveway: In the ultimate buildout of University Place, all of these streets should resemble typical urban streets with sidewalks, street trees, and other streetscape amenities such as bike racks, trash receptacles, urban pedestrian-scaled street lighting, etc. Suggest adding the passage “Pedestrian accommodation and enhancements will be provided along of all the Internal Typical Driveways, according to the specific cross sectional properties of each street segment as future redevelopment occurs” with flexibility for alternatives per staff review and approval.

Development Options-Pods

Although these examples are very conceptual in nature, they are helpful in beginning to portray some of the place character qualities that can be realized by application of the Framework Plan and Design Standards. The Outdoor Amenity Space character examples are illustrating active mixed-use places that fit with idea of a town center. My main comment about the public place character and distribution is that they are spaces mostly internal to the property and while distributed throughout the redevelopment area, the proposed public place network could be better connected to the edges of the site, to create vibrant places where the community interfaces with University Place and offering some “front door” spaces or landscapes that draw pedestrians into the new walkable town center. Attached are two sketches illustrating some ideas in this regard.

3. Sketch 1 (Pod A): Rather than providing the outdoor amenity space in a liner lawn strip along Willow Drive, suggest focusing it at the corner of Willow and the mall entrance drive, extending east to connect to the outdoor pedestrian area in front of the cinema and to the proposed new public place further east, creating an integrated series of public places connecting the community and the town center. Also, given that the proposed street between Pod A and the cinema is now considered a service street for loading and service, suggest having the conceptual Private Courtyard for Building A open up to the Willow Drive frontage, which can also serve to break down Building A’s massing along the street.
4. Sketch 2 (Pod D): Suggest looking for ways to make it seem like the central park/green space/plaza in Pod “C” extends southward to Estes. The character of this space could take various forms. It could be green space, a plaza, or a combination of both. Another possibility would be for it to still accommodate some parking, but feature some decorative paving and landscape that would allow the area to become a kind of “mixed use” parking lot, where a farmer’s market or other occasional gathering could occur. Whatever its character becomes, it is suggested that proposed new buildings A & B be located along this extension to help spatially define it.