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**TOWN OF SEVERANCE  
ORDINANCE NO. 2023-02**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SEVERANCE,  
COLORADO, AMENDING CHAPTER 16 OF THE SEVERANCE MUNICIPAL CODE BY  
THE ADDITION OF A NEW ARTICLE 19 PERTAINING TO NONRESIDENTIAL  
COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council has determined that the Town’s current development and design standards for non-residential commercial and office developments set forth in the Severance Land Use Code (Chapter 16 of the Severance Municipal Code) are inadequate; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town desires to enact a new Article 19 of the Severance Land Use Code to address these existing deficiencies, and the Town finds that enacting comprehensive regulations relating to commercial and office design and development standards will increase the effectiveness of the Land Use Code with regard to its underlying goals, and that enacting a new Article 19 of the Land Use Code regarding commercial and office design and development standards within the Town to preserve the integrity of the Land Use Code and the character of the Town promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare.

**WHEREAS**, this ordinance is enacted pursuant to the Town of Severance’s home rule authority under Article XX, § 6 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado, and pursuant to the Town of Severance’s police powers, in order to safeguard and preserve the public health, safety and welfare of the community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE  
TOWN OF SEVERANCE, COLORADO:**

Section 1. Chapter 16, “Land Use Code,” of the Severance Municipal Code is amended by the addition of a new Article 19, entitled “Non-Residential Design and Development Standards,” to read as follows:

**ARTICLE 19 - NON-RESIDENTIAL USE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT  
STANDARDS**

**Sec. 16.19.10 Intent.**

- (a) *Purpose.* The intent of this section is to apply enhanced design criteria and guidelines to all non-residential development within the Town.
- (b) *Provisions.* The provisions of this section are in addition to the requirements of the underlying zone district and supersede the zone district requirements. In the event of a discrepancy between the two, the Manager’s decision shall be final.
- (c) *Applicability.* These standards apply to:
  - (1) New nonresidential commercial and office development.
  - (2) Modifications or additions to existing nonresidential commercial and office development, but only the portion of the development being modified.

- (3) Mixed-use developments that incorporate multi-family housing shall be subject to the multi-family design criteria of this code.

## **Sec. 16.19.20 Non-Residential Commercial and Office Design and Development Standards.**

The following tables establish the minimum design standards for all nonresidential commercial and office projects. Tables are divided into two sections: Building Design and Development Standards and Open Space, Landscaping and Pedestrian Connections.

Using the Tables:

- ( X ): denotes a requirement for that zone district
- ( - ): reflects a non-applicable standard for the specific zone district column
- ( \* ): denotes additional standards apply found below the table in the Supplemental Provisions section
- Information other than ( X ) or ( - ) indicates specific development standards in the cell
- SP column is Suburban Perimeter Zone District
- DN column is Development Node Zone District (including the Industrial Subzone)
- TC column is Town Core Zone District
- The Rural Residential Zone District is not included as it does not permit Commercial Development

Focus areas identified in the tables include Massing and Scale; Building Materials; Horizontal and Vertical Articulation; Transparency; Roof Forms; Colors; Screening; and Open Space, Landscaping and Amenities.

Building Design and Development Standards*	Zone District		
	SP	DN <sup>1</sup>	TC
<b>Massing and Scale*</b>			
Maximum Stories	2	3	
Front Setback	20'	15'	0'
Interior Side Setback	10'	15'	5'
Corner Side Setback	20'	15'	5'
Rear Setback	15'	15'	5'
Rooftop Amenity Permitted	-	X	X
<b>Building Materials*</b>			
Simple material finishes are encouraged, and matte finishes are preferred.			
Primary Materials Required	50% to 90%		

Secondary Materials Required	20% to 40%	
Accent Materials	10% to 30%	
<b>Building Entrances</b>		
Facades that face a public street or civic open space shall contain a single-story primary entrance feature.	X	
Primary entrances shall be clearly defined and oriented to the sidewalk and primary pedestrian ways.	X	
Entrance features shall occur along a building frontage.	Every 75'	Every 50'
For a single-tenant building, façades shall be differentiated by horizontal massing techniques.	X	
Public entryways shall create architectural interest and variation from other portions of the building by incorporating the following features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in building plane through recesses and/or projections a minimum of two feet (2') in dimension;</li> <li>• Canopies, awnings, arcades, galleries, or other overhangs;</li> <li>• Raised corniced parapets over the door;</li> <li>• Peaked roof forms;</li> <li>• Display windows;</li> <li>• Integrated architectural embellishments such as moldings;</li> <li>• Changes in building material, color, and/or texture;</li> <li>• Special paving treatments;</li> <li>• Other substantial design elements that add visual interest.</li> </ul>	Minimum of 3 features	Minimum of 5 features
Corner buildings to be designed with angled entrances at the corner.	-	In an urban / walkable context
<b>Horizontal Articulation</b>		
Building façades greater than fifty feet (50') in length shall incorporate variations in the wall plane with projections, recesses, or other variations from the main mass having a depth of at least two feet (2').	X	
Building façades shall incorporate a change of materials as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least three (3) materials for street facing façades or when facing other public areas; and</li> <li>• At least two (2) materials for all other facades.</li> </ul>	X	
Each building façade shall incorporate the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in building colors;</li> <li>• Change in textures;</li> <li>• Variation in window design; or</li> <li>• Other substantial design elements that add visual interest.</li> </ul>	Minimum of 2 elements	Minimum of 3 elements
Remaining blank wall areas shall be broken-up by patterns of windows and doors, ornamental architectural details or changes in materials that are consistent with the architectural style of the building.	X	
<b>Vertical Articulation</b>		
Buildings taller than twenty feet (20') shall be designed so the massing or façade articulation of the building presents a clear base, middle, and top.	X	
Visually heavier and more massive elements shall be incorporated at the building base with lighter elements above the base. Upper stories shall	X	



not appear heavier or demonstrate greater mass than the lower stories of the building.	
<p>Lower levels of multi-story buildings are to be differentiated by incorporating elements such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veneer banding or wainscot;</li> <li>• Change in materials and/or change in textures;</li> <li>• Heavier materials and darker colors on lower levels;</li> <li>• Integrated covered walkways, trellises, or architectural awnings;</li> <li>• Low planters and walls; or</li> <li>• Other substantial design elements that distinguish lower levels.</li> </ul>	X
<p>Buildings shall incorporate four-sided design where all parts are perceived as a coordinated part of a unified whole. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sides shall exhibit the same quality, continuity, and durability of design including the same primary and secondary materials. Important sides can reflect priority in the allocation of materials.</li> <li>• All sides visible from streets, public spaces, or active portions of adjacent sites shall have a similar level of trim, accent material, details, and ornamentation. Greater importance shall be given to areas closest to the public realm or with greater visibility. Parts not exposed to the public may be designed for utility.</li> </ul>	X
<b>Transparency (Windows, Doors, and Openings)</b>	
Ground floor façades facing a public street or other public area shall contain windows and/or doorways.	50% minimum of the total area
Upper floor facades facing a public street or other public area shall contain windows and/or doorways.	15% minimum of the total area
Storefront display windows and doors shall allow visibility into and out of the store.	X
Windows shall be accented and defined with detail elements, such as frames, sills, and lintels.	X
<b>Colors</b>	
Colors shall compliment one another and fit the overall architectural character of the area and be context sensitive to surrounding buildings.	X
Intense, bright, or fluorescent colors and glossy finishes shall not be used as the predominant color on any exterior wall or roof of any structure.	X
<b>Roof Form</b>	
<p>No roofline along any building elevation shall exceed 30 feet in length without a visual variation that incorporates any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projections or recessions of at least two feet (2') in depth;</li> <li>• Dormers;</li> <li>• Change in roof height of at least two feet (2'); or</li> <li>• Distinct architectural features.</li> </ul>	X
Roofs of buildings shall have parapets or enclosures concealing flat roofs and roof-top equipment from public view and be constructed of materials that match the building in quality and detail. Three-dimensional cornice treatments shall be incorporated as part of the architectural design.	X

Roofs shall be designed to accommodate solar energy systems to the maximum extent practical.	X
Roofing materials shall be appropriate to the building architecture.	X
<b>Colors</b>	
Colors shall complement one another and fit the overall architectural character of the area and be context sensitive to surrounding buildings.	X
Intense, bright, or fluorescent colors and glossy finishes shall not be used as the predominant color on any exterior wall or roof of any structure.	X
<b>Screening of Ancillary Uses and Utilities</b>	
Ancillary uses such as outdoor storage areas, trash and recycling areas, loading and unloading areas, service areas, HVAC equipment, and on-site utilities shall be screened to the greatest extent possible from view of public rights-of-way, amenity and public spaces, and adjacent properties by a combination of walls, fences, landscaping, or other similar device and be incorporated into the overall site and building design.	X
Building mounted utilities and equipment shall be screened from view of public rights-of-way, amenity and public spaces, and adjacent properties by a combination of walls, fences, landscaping, or other similar devices, and shall be painted to match the adjacent wall color, when applicable.	X
Ancillary uses shall be located to the rear of the property or in a way that mitigates their potential impacts on surrounding properties and the public realm.	X
Views of ancillary uses shall be separated from sidewalks and on-site pedestrian ways. Screening structures shall be made of the same materials as the principal structure if not placed behind the building.	X
Outdoor display and storage areas shall not encroach on any portion of a walkway, drive aisles, required parking spaces, or landscape area unless otherwise authorized by this Code.	X

[III](#) *Includes Development Node Industrial Sub-Zoning*

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**Sec. 16.19.30****Supplemental Provisions for Non-Residential - Building Design and Development Standards.****a. Site Design Considerations**

1. Buildings shall be arranged to frame, enclose, or give prominence to pedestrian corridors, outdoor gathering spaces, main street pedestrian or vehicle access corridors, or the corners of street intersections or entry points into the development.
2. Elements that shall be coordinated between adjacent sites include:
  - A. Shared driveways for access;
  - B. Linkages of internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems;
  - C. Linkages of open space systems;
  - D. Areas and access for refuse and recycling collection;
  - E. Drainage and detention facilities; and
  - F. Other improvements where a coordinated approach benefits the larger area.

**b. Massing and Scale**

1. Accessible elements are permitted to extend above the maximum building height.
2. A height or shadow study shall be required when reviewing a structure over three (3) stories.
3. Where applicable, building heights shall transition to adjacent residential properties and be no greater than two (2) stories taller than the tallest adjacent residential structure. Appropriate buffering and landscaping shall be incorporated as required in this Code.
4. The Town may approve a reduced side and rear setback in the Development Node Zone District when the following criteria are met:
  - A. The reduced setback shall be no less than ten (10) feet from all property lines;
  - B. The reduced setback is not adjacent to the Suburban Perimeter Zone District containing single-family housing;
  - C. The height of the building within the reduced setback area is no more than a single story in height; and
  - D. Required easements, utilities, and landscaping and buffering criteria can be accommodated within the reduced setback area.
5. Rooftop open space shall be included in all open space requirements.
  - A. Rooftop open spaces shall maintain adequate safety features to reduce the possibility of harm during their use. These safety mechanisms shall be shown on the site plan submittal and shall be approved by the Manager.



### c. Building Materials

Exterior building materials should be simple, durable, and shall be compatible with the idea of agrarian architecture. While some diversity in exterior building materials and color is a part of the tradition of commercial districts, the range should be limited to promote a sense of visual continuity for the Town.

1. Permitted Materials. No more than four (4) materials should be used, including the use of secondary and accent materials. Exterior materials shall be permitted as follows:
  - A. Primary Materials:
    - Brick, unpainted
    - Natural Stone, unpainted
    - Other quality materials, such as repurposed materials
  - B. Secondary Materials:
    - Any primary materials may be used as a secondary material
    - Glass (*i.e., clear, and semi-transparent*)
    - Metal Siding (*twenty five percent (25%) maximum per building façade*)
    - Color Concrete
    - Stucco (*masonry*)
    - Quality wood or composite siding or panels
    - Architectural tiles
    - Fiber cement board
    - Other quality materials, such as repurposed materials
  - C. Accent Materials:
    - Any Primary or Secondary Materials may be used as an accent material
    - Wood trim (*or equal or better simulated material*)
    - Precast stone, or wood moldings or similar architectural details (*or equal or better simulated material*)
  - D. Prohibited Materials:
    - Vinyl Siding
    - Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (*EIFS*)
    - Reflective or mirror glass

Open Space, Landscaping, and Pedestrian Connections*	Zone District		
	SP	DN <sup><a href="#">11</a></sup>	TC
<i>(Reference Open Space, Landscaping, and Buffering criteria of this Code)</i>			
Open Space			
Developments shall provide the minimum twenty percent (20%) of the gross land as functional open space. An exception may be granted by the Manager for infill town core projects.	10% to 20% as passive open space 20% to 30% as active open space		

Open space designs shall be context sensitive, considering that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compact and formal gathering spaces are most appropriate in walkable commercial and mixed-use areas; and</li><li>• More spacious and natural areas are most appropriate in large / spread-out commercial or industrial areas.</li></ul>	X		
Landscaping			
The following areas are required to be landscaped: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bufferyards;</li><li>• Plazas and courtyards;</li><li>• Parking areas using islands/medians/perimeter plantings;</li><li>• Streetscapes;</li><li>• Stormwater areas; and</li><li>• Unused portions of a site not already occupied by site features.</li></ul>	X	X	Context Sensitive
A minimum of 1 tree / 1,000 sqft of landscaped area shall be provided, subject to adopted water conservation policies.	Minimum 50% shade/ deciduous Minimum 25% coniferous		
A minimum of 1 shrub / 150 sqft of landscaped area shall be provided and must be grouped and distributed throughout the site. With approval, trees may be substituted for up to ½ of the required shrubs at the rate of 1 tree / 10 shrubs.	X		
Irrigated turf or an alternative as approved, shall be utilized for active recreation areas, and maintained to appropriate industry standards.	X		
Native grass is highly encouraged for areas that will not function as active recreation areas. Native grass must be weed-free and maintained at a maximum height of eight inches (8") following industry standards for establishment timeframes.	X		
Landscaped areas shall be covered with live irrigated, lower water consuming ground cover, except for areas where additional hardscape is allowed or an alternative as approved.	Minimum 75% of landscape area	Context Sensitive	
Pedestrian walks and other hardscape landscape features and amenities may comprise the required landscape areas. Includes features such as outdoor seating areas, plazas with recreation and entertainment areas, water features, public art, and approved permeable pavement.	Maximum 50% of landscape area	Maximum 75% of landscape area	
Landscape buffers shall be provided in accordance with the buffering criteria of this Code.	X	Context Sensitive	
Parking lot landscaping shall be provided in accordance with the parking lot design criteria of this Code.	X		
Plazas and courtyards shall include following amenity element types:	Minimum of 3 element types	Minimum of 4	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seating at 1 space / 150 square feet of plaza/courtyard area (<i>seating may be provided with chairs and tables, benches, and/or seating walls</i>);</li> <li>Trees appropriate for the space planted at 1 tree / 750 square feet of plaza or courtyard area;</li> <li>Art or creative features (<i>i.e., water features, fire features, interactive features for families and kids</i>);</li> <li>Areas and facilities for recreation, entertainment, or educational activities;</li> <li>Other appropriate amenities or design elements.</li> </ul>			element types
<b>Streetscape</b>			
Perimeter treatment adjacent to roadways should include a landscape buffer of varying widths, with a minimum width of ten feet (10') and a maximum width of twenty feet (20'). An exception may be granted by the Manager for infill town core projects.		X	
A pathway at least six feet (6') in width shall be provided parallel to the street. The pathway shall be designed to provide adequate space for pedestrians, street furniture, outdoor seating areas, landscaping, and other amenities to enhance the pedestrian experience.	X	X	Context Sensitive
A landscape strip ten feet (10') in width shall be planted with at least 1 tree / 35 feet of frontage between the street and pedestrian pathway. The landscape strip, where applicable, shall be landscaped with irrigated lower water-consuming grass or other material suitable for the area. An exception may be granted by the Manager for infill town core projects.			75% shade / deciduous species 25% other approved species
Coniferous / evergreen trees shall be placed a minimum of ten feet (10') off the southern edge of a public street, sidewalk, or trail to minimize winter icing concerns where possible.		X	
<b>Pedestrian Connections</b>			
Sites shall include direct pedestrian connections and circulation routes at the same or greater frequency as is provided by streets, driveways, and internal access streets.		X	
Pedestrian access and circulation within a site shall provide dedicated pedestrian facilities that connect each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public entrances of all buildings;</li> <li>Public sidewalks on adjacent streets or internal access streets;</li> <li>Required open space and other site amenities;</li> <li>Community trails located within the vicinity of the site; and</li> </ul> Adjacent project sites, where pedestrian access between sites via the sidewalks on streets or internal access streets is remote or nonexistent.		X	
Pedestrian traffic shall be separate and distinct from motor vehicle circulation to the greatest extent possible. If not possible, potential hazards shall be mitigated using the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special paving, pavement markings, signs, striping and/or bollards;</li> <li>Median refuge areas, traffic calming features, and landscaping;</li> <li>Lighting or other means to clearly delineate pedestrian areas.</li> </ul>		X	



Internal sidewalk widths shall meet the following minimum criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General: five feet (5')</li> <li>• Along a building façade that abuts a parking area or along parking with vehicle overhangs: eight feet (8')</li> <li>• Along a building façade with a primary entrance: ten feet (10')</li> </ul>	X		
Pedestrian walkways shall feature adjoining landscaped areas that include trees, shrubs, benches, flower beds, ground cover or other materials for not less than fifty percent (50%) of its length.	X	X	15% - Context Sensitive
Sidewalks shall be located an average of eight feet (8') away from the façade of the building to provide planting beds for foundation landscaping, except where features such as arcades, display windows or entryways are part of the façade.	X	X	Context Sensitive
<b>Water Conservation</b>			
A minimum of seventy percent (70%) of shrubs or trees shall be classified as very low or low water use.	X		
A maximum of ten percent (10%) of shrubs or trees shall be classified as high-water use.	X		
Sites over three (3) acres shall be organized into distinct hydrozones according to their microclimatic needs and water requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plants with similar water requirements shall be grouped together in the same irrigation zones.</li> <li>• Grass turf areas classified as medium or high-water use shall be limited to high use or high visibility areas.</li> </ul>	X		
Grass varieties listed as low water use may be used without limitation.	X		

[III](#) Includes Development Node Industrial Sub-Zoning

#### **Sec. 16.19.40. Supplemental Provisions – Open Space, Landscaping, and Pedestrian Connections.**

This design criteria supplements and supports the criteria located in other sections of this Code pertaining to topics such as open space, landscaping, buffering, and parking design standards. Any applicant or entity wishing to develop or construct within the Town shall review and conform to all applicable criteria of this Code.

##### **a. Open Space and Landscaping**

1. Open spaces should be designed to serve multiple requirements of this Code, including buffers, screening, stormwater, or formal open space. In no instance should open space design and integration compromise other design objections and functions, such as site drainage.
2. Plazas and courtyards may be required for mixed-use or nonresidential developments based on consideration of the scope and scale of the proposal and mix of uses, the proposed building placement and design, and the quality of the proposed landscape and screening design.
3. Plazas and courtyards shall be centrally located within the development

area and accessible to residents, customers, and guests they are intended to serve.

Section 2. If any article, section, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, such decision shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The Town Council hereby declares it would have passed this ordinance and each part or parts hereof irrespective of the fact that any one part or parts be declared unconstitutional or invalid.

Section 3. All other ordinances or portions thereof inconsistent or conflicting with this ordinance or any portion hereof are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency or conflict.

Section 4. This ordinance is deemed necessary for the immediate protection of the health, welfare and safety of the community.

Section 5. Violations of this ordinance shall be punishable in accordance with Section 1-4-20 of the Severance Municipal Code.

INTRODUCED, READ, ADOPTED, APPROVED, AND ORDERED PUBLISHED IN FULL this 28 day of February, 2023.

TOWN OF SEVERANCE, COLORADO

  
Matthew Fries, Mayor

ATTEST:



Leah Vanarsdall, MMC, Town Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Hayashi & Macsalka, LLC, Town Attorney



