Lincoln-Lancaster County
PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT

Reimagining Downtown Lincoln's Design Standards

Downtown Design Standards have been in place since 2008 and have contributed to the downtown experience for Lincoln residents, employees, and visitors. The 2026 update recognizes new construction materials and trends that will continue to help create welcoming, high-quality places for the next generation of growth.



Scope

- Durable materials across primary facades
- Cohesive color & material palettes
- Design and construct projects with a life expectancy of 50+ years
- Allow glass curtain wall construction
- Limit blank walls
- Street-level transparency

What Is Changing

Materials & Facades

Durable, consistent materials required across full façade—not just the first 20 feet. Ground floor windows must be highly transparent; large blank walls must be avoided on primary facades.

Entrances

Every building gets one clear, street-facing main entrance — shared by everyone. No separate side doors for accessibility; ramps and access are built into the front door experience.

Parking Structures

Garages that face public streets must include ground floor active space or design for future conversion from parking stalls to active space.

Bicycle Parking

Establish bike parking standards for residential and non-residential uses.

Landscaping & Streetscape

Require shade trees to break up long parking rows; install sidewalks and street trees alongside larger projects

Sustainability

Require EV ready parking spaces for larger parking facilities. Encourage energy-efficient design and deconstruction of buildings.

Timeline

- Now & Ongoing — Developer Outreach
- August 26 — DLA Board Meeting
- September 1 — Urban Design Committee
- September 14 — Neighborhood Roundtable
- October 1 — Public Open House
- November 18 — Planning Commission
- December 14 — City Council

Downtown Design Standards Boundary Map

