

# HOME TOWN

# PATTERNS

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVEMENTS  
LIVINGSTON, MONTANA  
VOLUNTEER COLLECTION  
RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL  
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Commercial Pattern	

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## INTRODUCTION

The patterns that become evident in any community do so over an extended period of time, and become the collected vocabulary of a town's physical character. Sometimes they may be universal to any comfortably inhabited place, sometimes they may be very specific to one place only.

Certain patterns, like the sawtooth skyline of Livingston's Main Street illustrated on the cover of this publication, are something that will never be replicated. This kind of pattern is incredibly valuable to our community, and must be preserved.

Other patterns we can identify afford those who add to or alter our town useful hints about what is important to preserve, what is important to acknowledge, what is important to nurture.

Consider this document a work-in-progress. The patterns shown here are a collection of ideas whose validity will either be verified or disproved by those who construct our future.

We invite anyone to submit a pattern to expand this collection. Send us your ideas.

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# 1: STREET LIFE



What makes any street authentic, any downtown “real”, are the bits of everyday work, commerce and life that occupy the sidewalks. This is not about street furnishings, but about products, workers, bosses, equipment, restaurant seating, items in transit, parked pets - the workaday evidence of this street as the heart of the community.

Both residents and visitors benefit when surrounded by life's clutter in the community's center.



**Encourage everyone to use the sidewalks in their day-to-day activities. Make the sidewalks generous enough in size to accommodate this outdoor living.**

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## 2: MAKE IT FIT

Our town's residential areas are connected by a simple pattern - a typical residential street has a grass boulevard, wide sidewalk, front lawn, and finally the home itself.



G Street, Livingston, Montana

Yet by slightly changing this pattern our neighborhoods have created their own unique look and language. For example, the east side of town is quite different from the west side.



Yellowstone Street, Livingston, Montana

**When you add your own touches, look around you! Adjust them to fit into our historic, unique neighborhoods.**

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JOSH NELSON

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

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### 3: WHAT CAN YOU SEE?



Small town businesses create a unique connection between their interiors and the street outside. Unlike “box stores”, these businesses take advantage of sidewalk exposure, showing their goods to customers through large windows.

Another kind of connection is also created - how many times have you seen a neighbor shopping and stepped into the store to chat, or stepped outside to hail a familiar face?

This connection between interior and exterior is both an economic and a social benefit to our community.

**Don't hide! Open up your business and take advantage of its connection to the sidewalk.**

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JOSH NELSON

COMMERCIAL PATTERN

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## 4: CHERISH THE DENTS



Livingston is a community established over a century ago. There is tremendous social and economic value in that history and its visibility, both the good parts and the bad parts.

An impulse to “clean up the place” can often destroy this value. Appreciate the parts of your community that still exhibit the wear-and-tear of life. Remember, blemish-free places are often devoid of life as well as devoid of quirks.



**Uncover, preserve and show off evidence of our past - no matter how useless today, or how out of style, or how jarring the memories aroused.**

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## 5: CANOPY COVER

Trees are an inherent characteristic of many small Montana towns, particularly those near watercourses. Many of our streets are lined with trees providing shade, a welcoming atmosphere, and a beautiful neighborhood appearance.

The canopy created by these trees also tempers the appearance of overhead utilities and other industrial appurtenances.



**Plant and maintain trees in Livingston's boulevards to create canopies throughout our residential neighborhoods.**

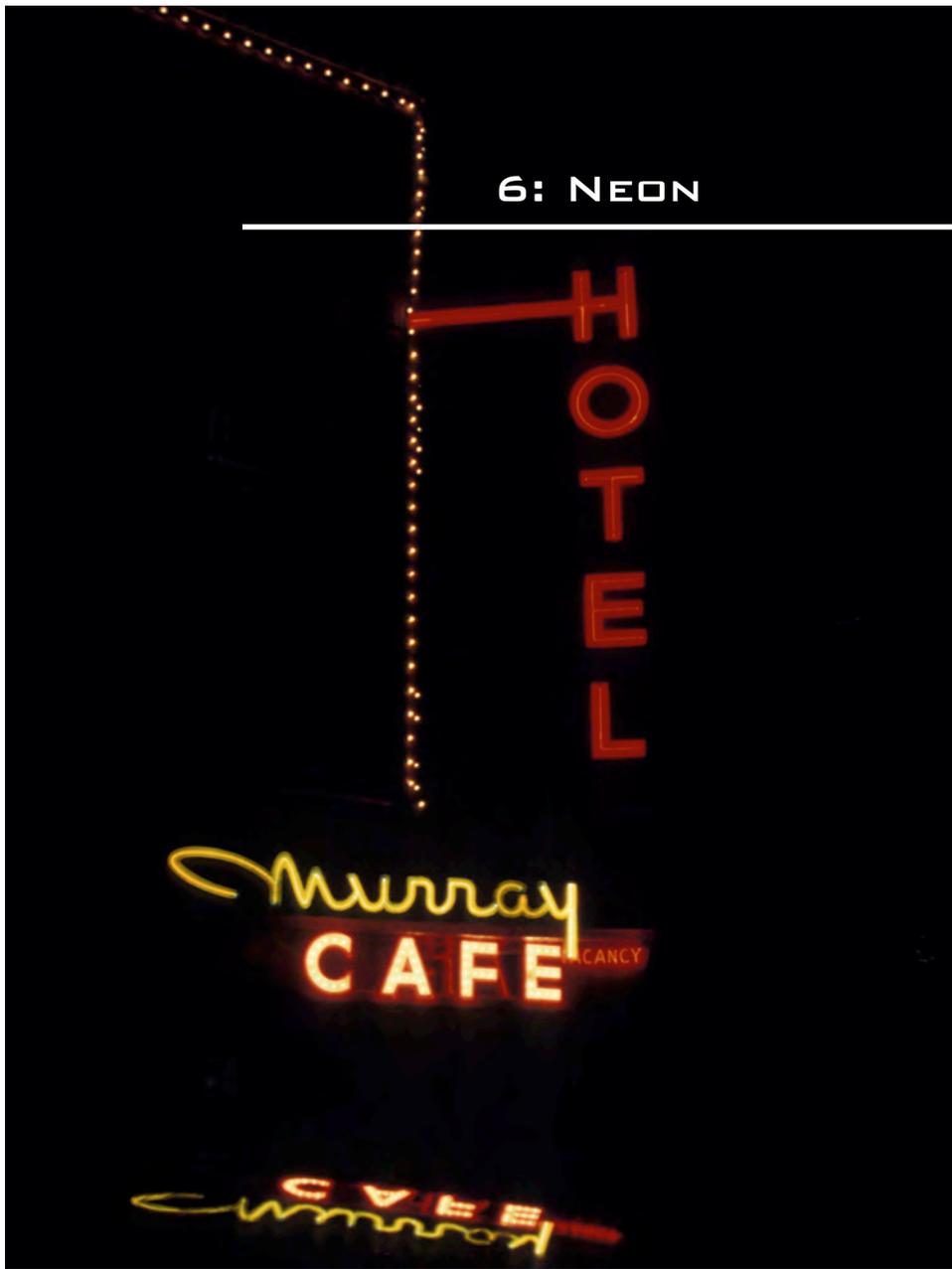
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JOSH NELSON

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

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6: NEON



Livingston is blessed with a significant number of neon signs. Some date from a period of time important to our “small town America” image; others of newer vintage elaborate upon the same impression.

These signs contribute tremendously to the atmosphere of downtown, particularly after darkness sets in. They are an important part of what makes the central business district attractive as a social activity center.

**Encourage the use of neon within downtown.**

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LARRY RAFFETY

COMMERCIAL PATTERN

## 7: SHOW IT OFF



hidden in 1981



regained in 1983

originally a two story glazed entrance into Thompson Merchantile



lost again in 2005

There are details of our architectural past hidden in plain view throughout Livingston. Often as simple a technique as paint color can illuminate these details. When you do so you are not just being decorative - you are celebrating this community's past, and inviting all of us to enjoy special things that often go unnoticed.

**Show off historic details of buildings, whether or not they are currently relevant or complete.**

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LARRY RAFFETY

COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

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## 8: NO CLONES PLEASE



Our neighborhoods are a jumble reflecting the variety of individuals who constructed homes and outbuildings, their differing social and economic status, and construction over time. These neighborhoods will remain healthier both socially and economically if they continue to be mixed in this manner.

Constructing significant areas of identical, or superficially different identical residences will harm neighborhoods in the long run, no matter how impressive the immediate economic gain. Both property values and social values in Livingston rely on diversity for their strength, and will be harmed by decreases in that diversity.



cheaper clones



more expensive clones

**Strive to maintain a variety of styles, sizes, and economic opportunities, all mixed willy-nilly, in our neighborhoods.**

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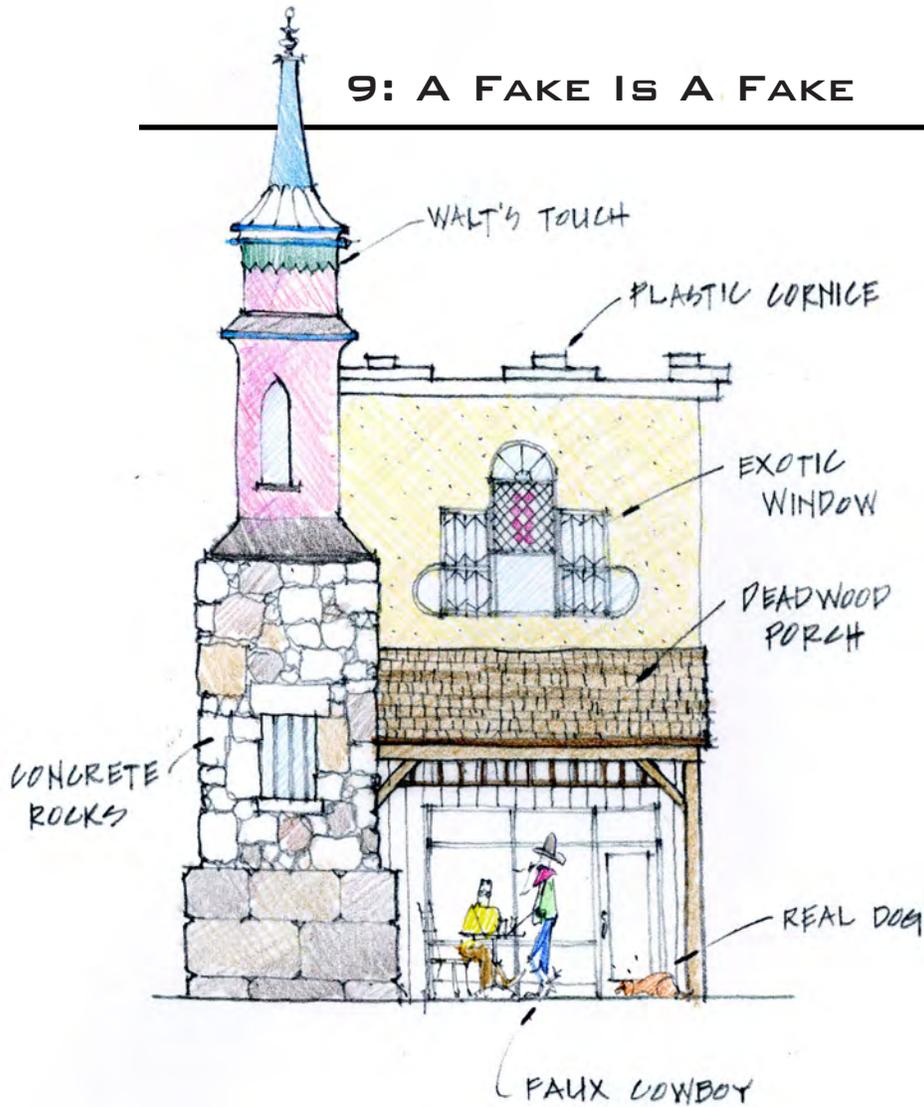
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LARRY RAFFETY

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

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## 9: A FAKE IS A FAKE



Livingston's downtown is an accurate illustration of small-town history, where individuals built to suit their needs or aspirations, and buildings reflected true materials and methods. Construction was not intended to disguise.

This disinterest in fakes is important - artificiality diminishes a community's unique personality and its historic references.

**Don't create fakes.**

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LARRY RAFFETY

COMMERCIAL PATTERN

## 10: NATURAL BARRIERS



use of bushes to hide chain link fencing

Our neighborhoods are full of property barriers, intended not only as dividers but as protection for children and pets. Many of them are now of chain link fencing.

A quick walk through the residential streets of Livingston will give you an appreciation of how landscaping has been used to create a more natural barrier in many instances. Planting shrubs next to fences creates a more pleasant barrier without diminishing its function. Imagine how much more soft and welcoming your street would appear if this approach was typical.



wood as a "natural barrier"

**Integrate landscaping and natural materials into property barriers to create more aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.**

# 1 1: RESPECT



respectful contemporary/poorly repaired history



ignored history

Authentic communities express themselves through building that illustrates continuous development over time. Old is mixed with middle-aged, and both are mixed with the very new. Sometimes the juxtaposition is wonderful, sometimes horrible - often it's a mix of the two.

New additions will only be successful if their exists:

- respect for the overall context created by past construction.
- respect for existing individual buildings.
- respect for contemporary contributions.
- sensitive design addressing all of the above.

**Design new construction with a profound respect towards both historic and contemporary contexts.**

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COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

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## 12: BE AN INDIVIDUAL



A simple variation in paint color identifies this building as special - different from its neighbors. The paint scheme also ties this building to other advertising for the business, doubling the value of the investment.



Stucco does not necessarily have to be painted as a receding, background color. This vivid purple not only highlights the business beneath, but also adds delightful interest to downtown.

**Use the everyday components of construction to say something unique in comparison to your neighbors.**

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COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

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## 13: USE THE WALLS



Blank wall surfaces provide an opportunity to express yourself or advertise your products. Painting directly on the surface is preferable (as opposed to applied panels), as direct painting gives a more interesting result, ties the graphics directly to the buildings themselves, and better suits the historic district's character.



**Paint graphics and advertisements directly on wall surfaces. Fill large blank areas to a considerable extent.**

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