



# Architectural Review Board

## Staff Report (ID # 9206)

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**Report Type:** Study Session **Meeting Date:** 5/17/2018

**Summary Title:** South El Camino Design Guidelines Study Session

**Title:** Study Session to discuss the South El Camino Design Guidelines

**From:** Hillary Gitelman

### Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB):

1. Discuss the South El Camino Real Design Guidelines

### Background

During the April 19<sup>th</sup> ARB hearing, staff and several Board members agreed to a future in-depth discuss on the South El Camino Real Design Guidelines, to gain a common understanding of how these Guidelines should be implemented.

The South El Camino Real Guidelines (Guidelines) can be found on the City's webpage at <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/19041>. The Guidelines apply to all new development and remodeling of building exteriors of frontage properties along El Camino Real between Stanford Avenue and the southern city limit boundary.

The Guidelines provide direction for enhancing the quality of El Camino Real. While the guidelines address issues and details ranging from lot coverage and site planning to the treatment of parking lots and façade details, there are several overriding design principals which provide the guiding framework for new projects. These Guiding Principles are written below and can be found on Page 10 of the Guidelines.

1. Create a pattern of pedestrian oriented "nodes" linked by corridors.
2. Create a pedestrian-oriented 12 foot sidewalk along El Camino Real featuring trees, planters and seating.
3. Bring buildings up to the sidewalk to reinforce the definition and importance of the street.
4. Public amenities such as a wider sidewalks, outdoor seating or outdoor dining are encouraged where appropriate.

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5. Buildings should have a minimum height of twenty-five feet in order to provide a presence in scale with El Camino Real. Two and three-story buildings are strongly encouraged.
6. All buildings should be oriented towards the street with entries facing El Camino Real.
7. Corners should be addressed with special features such as prominent entries, massing and architectural elements.
8. Building facades should animate the street with ample door and window openings, as well as amenities such as arcades, awnings, stairs, and balconies.
9. In order to create a cohesive streetscape, flat roofs with parapets are strongly encouraged. Building facades should be articulated with clearly expressed bases, bodies, and roofs or parapets.
10. Frontages along El Camino Real should have a scale and presence proportional to the scale and importance of the thoroughfare. Transitions to adjoining residential neighborhoods should be established with variations in scale, articulation, and setbacks.

Today's discussion will include, but not be limited to, the distinct portions of a building (aka top, middle and base), and how height limitations may or may not hinder good design.

A previous discussion on height limitations can be found in Attachment E of a staff report for 380 Cambridge Avenue - <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/62660>.

## Environmental Review

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the subject is not a project.

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