

\*NOT YET APPROVED\*

Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Ordinance of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Adding Chapter 18.24 of Title 18  
(Zoning) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code to Adopt Building Design Intent  
Statements and Objective Standards

The Council of the City of Palo Alto does ORDAIN as follows:

**SECTION 2.** Chapter 18.24 (Objective Design Standards) of Title 18 (Zoning) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code is added as follows:

**Sections:**

- 18.24.010 Purpose and Applicability**
- 18.24.020 Public Realm/Sidewalk Character**
- 18.24.030 Site Access**
- 18.24.040 Building Orientation and Setbacks**
- 18.24.050 Building Massing**
- 18.24.060 Façade Design**
- 18.24.070 Residential Entries**
- 18.24.080 Open Space**
- 18.24.090 Materials**
- 18.24.100 Sustainability and Green Building Design**

**18.24.010 Purpose and Applicability**

(a) Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide guidance for good design in the form of “intent statements” for all project types and to provide objective design standards for multifamily and residential mixed-use development projects that qualify as Housing Development Projects under the Housing Accountability Act. Diagrams are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to convey required architectural style. Rather, the objective design standards aim to accommodate a variety of styles, construction types (e.g., wood frame, modular) and housing types including townhomes, apartments, condos, and mixed-use buildings.

(b) Applicability of Regulations

Within the following zones and combining districts, the intent statements apply to all project types (including non-residential projects), new construction, and renovations in the zoning districts identified below. Additionally, objective design standards apply to new multifamily housing with three or more units (see definition in 18.04.030), supportive and transitional housing, and residential mixed-use projects with at least two-thirds residential square footage:

- (1) Chapter 18.13: RM-20, RM-30, RM-40
- (2) Chapter 18.16: CN, CC, CC(2), CS
- (3) Chapter 18.18: CD-C, CD-S, CD-N
- (4) Chapter 18.20: MOR, ROLM, ROLM(E), RP, RP(5), GM – residential and residential mixed-use only; regulations do not apply to non-residential projects

(5) Chapter 18.28: PF – residential and residential mixed-use only; regulations do not apply to non-residential projects

(6) Chapter 18.34: PTOD combining district

**(c) Process and Alternative Compliance**

Each section of this chapter includes an intent statement that gives guidance for all applicable projects, regardless of use.

- (1) Housing development projects are required to comply with objective standards; however, applicants may choose to forgo one or more objective standards, in which case the housing development project will be evaluated to the spirit of the relevant intent statements and be subject to architectural review as set forth in Sections 18.76.020 and 18.77.070.
- (2) Non-Housing development projects and non-residential projects shall adhere to the spirit of the intent statements and be subject to architectural review as set forth in Section 18.76.020 and 18.77.070.

**(d) Definitions**

In addition to definitions provided in Chapter 18.04, the following definitions are specific to this Chapter.

- (1) “Primary Building Frontage” means the front lot line or frontage along the public right-of-way. In the case of a through-lot, the primary building frontage could be on either public right-of-way.
- (2) “Primary Building Entry” means the entrance leading to a lobby and accessed from the primary building frontage.
- (3) “Pedestrian Walkway” means a sidewalk or path that is publicly-accessible and connects from a public right-of-way to another public right-of-way or publicly accessible open space.
- (4) “Façade Modulation” means a change in building plane, either a recess or a projection, that changes the shape of the exterior massing of the building.

**18.24.020 Public Realm/Sidewalk Character**

**(a) Intent Statement**

To create an attractive and safe public realm and sidewalk space for pedestrians and cyclists through the implementation of design, landscaping, and infrastructure. Publicly accessible spaces and sidewalks should:

- (1) Design the transition between the public and private realm through the coordination of amenities and materials, such as accent paving, tree wells, lighting and street furniture (e.g., benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, news racks).
- (2) Complement or match accent paving to existing designs in the Downtown and California Avenue business district.
- (3) Provide sidewalk widths that accommodate landscaping, street trees, furniture, and pedestrian amenities; create a pleasant, desirable place to walk; provide shade; and enable comfortable pedestrian passage.
- (4) Provide amenities, such as parking and repair equipment, for micromobility, such as bicycles and scooters.

(b) Objective Standards

(1) Sidewalk Widths

(A) Public sidewalks abutting a development parcel in any commercial mixed-use district (CN, CS, CC, CC(2), CD-C, CD-S, CD-N, PTOD) shall have a minimum sidewalk width (curb to back of walk) of at least 10 feet. This standard may be met with a combination of pedestrian clear path and landscape and furniture strip (see Figure 1), as long as the pedestrian clear path is no less than 8 feet. If the existing public sidewalk does not meet the minimum standard, a publicly accessible extension of the sidewalk, with corresponding public access easement, shall be provided.

Notwithstanding the total dimensions required herein, the following streets/locations shall have a minimum sidewalk width as noted:

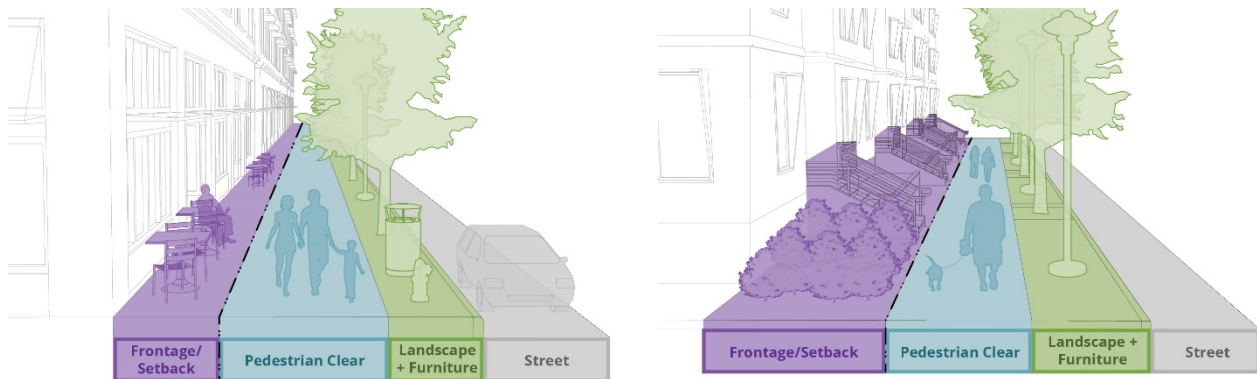
(i) El Camino Real: 12 ft

(ii) San Antonio Road, from Middlefield Road to East Charleston Road: 12 ft

(B) Publicly accessible sidewalks or walkways connecting through a development parcel (e.g., on a through lot) shall have a minimum six-foot width.

(C) Pedestrian walkways that are designed to provide access to bicycles shall have a minimum width of eight feet, with two feet of clear space on either side.

**Figure 1: Illustrative Sidewalk Section and Description of Zones**



*Mixed-Use Frontage*

*Residential Frontage*

Frontage		Sidewalk		Street
Building Setback	Frontage Area	Pedestrian Clear Zone	Landscape/Furniture Zone	Vehicles/Bike Lanes
<i>Mixed-Use</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk Dining</li> <li>• Outdoor Displays</li> <li>• Public Art</li> <li>• Seating</li> <li>• Trees/Planting</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street Trees/Planting</li> <li>• Street Lighting</li> <li>• Seating</li> <li>• Bike Parking</li> <li>• Public Art</li> <li>• Outdoor Dining</li> <li>• Bus Shelters</li> <li>• Utilities (e.g., hydrants)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street Parking</li> <li>• Bike Lanes</li> <li>• Drop-off Zones</li> <li>• Parklets</li> <li>• Bus Stops</li> </ul>
<i>Residential</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stoops</li> <li>• Porches</li> <li>• Front Yards</li> <li>• Trees/Planting</li> </ul>				

(2) Street Trees

Sidewalks shall include at least one street tree, within six feet of the sidewalk, for every 30 feet of linear feet of sidewalk length. Rights of way under control of the County of Santa Clara or State of California, supersede this requirement if they have conflicting regulations.

(3) Accent Paving

On University and California Avenues, new construction projects shall install accent paving along the project frontage(s) (e.g., at intersections, sidewalks and/or other publicly-accessible areas), as indicated in the table below.

<i>Street Segment</i>	<i>Paving Material</i>
University Avenue from Alma Street to Webster Street	Brick at corners Brick trim at mid-block
California Avenue from El Camino Real to Park Boulevard	Decorative Glass

(4) Mobility Infrastructure

(A) Micromobility infrastructure, such as locations to lock bicycles and scooters, shall be located within 30 feet of the primary building entry and/or a path leading to the primary building entry. This standard may be satisfied by existing infrastructure already located within 50 feet of the project site and located in the public right-of-way.

(B) Primary building entries shall provide at least one seating area or bench within 30 feet of building entry and/or path leading to building entry. This standard may be satisfied by existing seating area or benches located in public right-of-way within 50 feet of the building entry. On arterials—except Downtown—seating areas or benches shall not be located between the sidewalk and curb. Arterial roadways are identified in Map T-5 of the Comprehensive Plan and do not include residential arterials.

### **18.24.030 Site Access**

#### **(a) Intent Statement**

To provide facilities and accommodations for pedestrians, vehicles, cyclists, and transit users to safely and efficiently access and circulate both within individual sites and in the site's surrounding context. Site access should include the following elements:

- (1) Site circulation and access that presents a clear hierarchy and connectivity pattern both within a project and to adjacent sidewalks and transit stops. This hierarchy should prioritize pedestrians, bikes, vehicles, and utility/loading access in the order listed. This hierarchy may provide separate access for vehicles and other modes, or demonstrate how all modes are accommodated in shared access points.
- (2) Connections to side streets, open spaces, mews, alleys, and paseos
- (3) Vehicle, loading and service access that is integrated into building and landscape design and located to prevent conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists, while also provided convenient access to building entries.

#### **(b) Objective Standards**

##### **(1) Through-Lot Connections.**

Through lots located more than 300 feet from an intersecting street or pedestrian walkway shall provide a publicly accessible sidewalk or pedestrian walkway connecting the two streets.

##### **(2) Building Entries.**

Entries to Primary Building Entries shall be located from a public right-of-way or, if not possible, a publicly accessible Pedestrian Walkway.

##### **(3) Vehicle Access.**

(A) Vehicle access shall be located on alleys or side streets where available.

(B) Except for driveway access, off-street parking, off-street vehicle loading, and vehicular circulation areas are prohibited between the building and the primary building frontage.

##### **(4) Loading Docks and Service Areas.**

Loading and service areas shall be integrated into building and landscape design and located to minimize impact on the pedestrian experience as follows:

(A) Loading docks and service areas shall be located on facades other than the primary building frontage: on alleys, from parking areas, and/or at the rear or side of building if building includes these frontages. When only primary building frontage is available, loading docks and service areas shall be recessed a minimum five feet from the primary façade and shall be screened in accordance with Chapter 18.23.050.

(B) Loading dock and service areas located within setback areas shall be screened in accordance with Chapter 18.23.050 and separated from pedestrian access to the primary building entry to avoid impeding pedestrian movement and safety.

### **18.24.040 Building Orientation and Setbacks**

#### **(a) Intent Statement**

To create a coherent and active interface between private development and the public realm that contributes to the sense of place and structure of the neighborhood and enhances the

public's experience. Site design that responds to the orientation of adjacent uses and creates opportunities for landscaping and usable open space. Buildings and site design should meet the following criteria:

- (1) Buildings that create a street frontage that are compatible with nearby buildings and land uses.
- (2) Placement and orientation of doorways, windows, stoops, and landscape elements to create a direct relationship with the street.
- (3) Ground floor residential units that have direct entry and presence on the street, and maintain privacy.
- (4) Transitional spaces and buffer areas between buildings, parcels, and sites through building setbacks that distinguish private and public spaces.
- (5) Buildings that provide side and rear setbacks and/or upper story step backs to create a compatible relationship with adjacent lower density residential development.
- (6) Landscaped or usable areas that contain a balance between landscape and hardscape.
- (7) Optimized building orientation for thermal comfort, shading, daylighting, and natural ventilation and other forms of passive design.

(b) Objective Standards

(1) Treatment of Corner Buildings (less than 40 feet)

Corner buildings less than 40 feet in height and end units of townhouses or other attached housing products that face the street shall include the following features on their secondary building frontage:

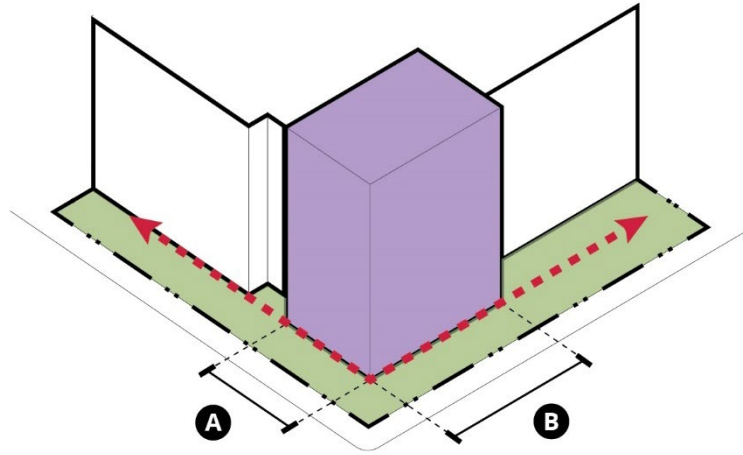
- (A) A height to width ratio greater than 1.2:1
- (B) A minimum of 15 percent fenestration area.
- (C) At least one facade modulation with a minimum depth of 18 inches and a minimum width of two feet. Examples: Wrap around front porch, bay window.

(2) Treatment of Corner Buildings (40 feet and higher)

Corner buildings 40 feet or taller in height shall include at least one of the following special features:

- (A) Street wall shall be located at the minimum front yard setback or build-to line for a minimum aggregated length of 40 feet in length on both facades meeting at the corner and shall include one or more of the following building features:

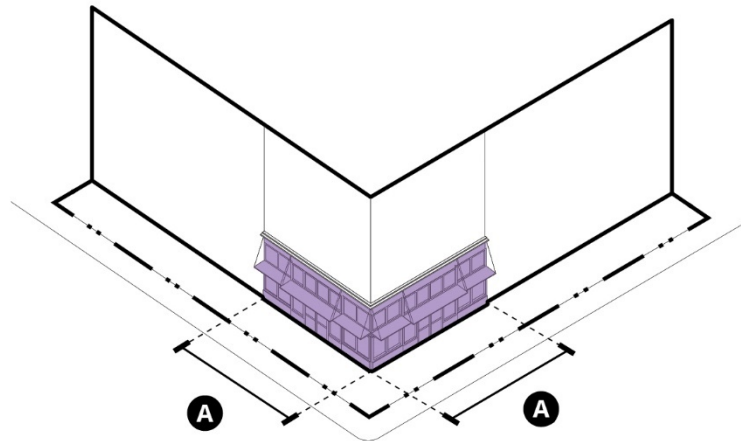
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- A** Length 1 of corner element       Front yard setback area
- B** Length 2 of corner element      - - - Build to line

where: **A** + **B** = aggregate length

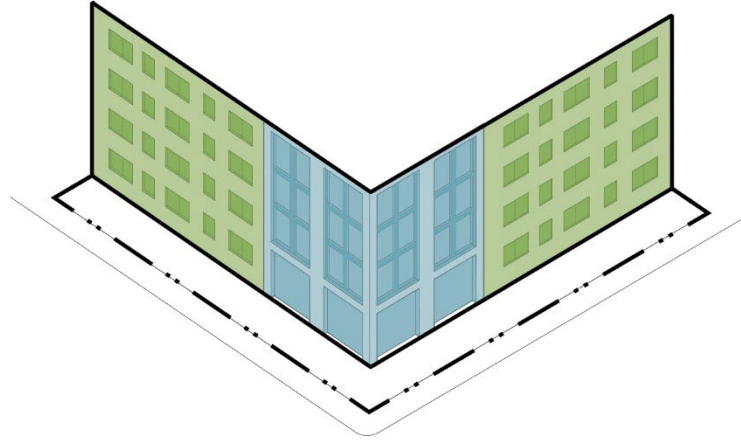
- (i) An entry to ground floor retail or primary building entrance located within 25 feet of the corner of the building



- Corner entry to ground floor retail or primary building entrance
- A** 25' maximum distance from corner

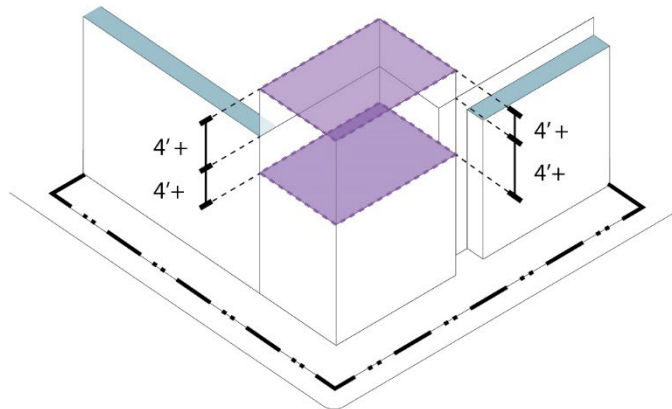
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- (ii) A different material application and/or fenestration pattern from the rest of the façade.



- Corner element material or fenestration pattern
- Remaining facade building material or fenestration pattern

- (iii) A change in height of at least 4 feet greater or less than the height of the abutting primary façade.

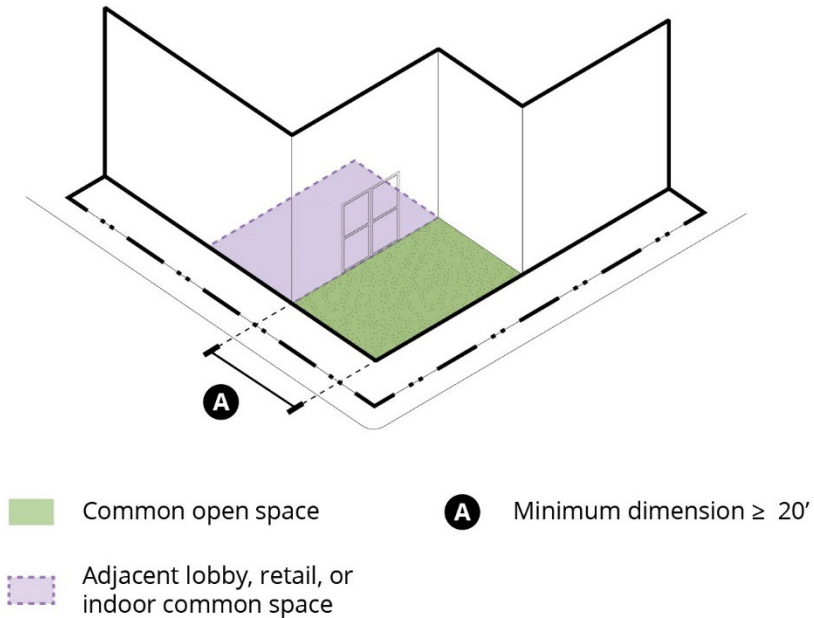


- Corner element height  $\leq 4'$  or  $\geq 4'$  than abutting height
- Building height of abutting facade

- (B) An open space with a minimum dimension of 20 feet and minimum area of 450 square feet. The open space shall be at least one of the following:
  - (i) A publicly accessible open space/plaza
  - (ii) A space used for outdoor seating for public dining



- (iii) A residential Common Open Space adjacent to a common interior space and less than two feet above adjacent sidewalk grade. Fences and railing shall be a minimum 50% transparent.



### (3) Primary Building Entry

The primary building entry shall meet at least one of the following standards:

- (A) Face a public right-of-way.
- (B) Face a publicly accessible pedestrian walkway.
- (C) Be visible from a public right-of-way through a forecourt or front porch that meets the following standards:
  - (i) For residential buildings with fewer than seven units, building entry forecourts or front porches shall be a minimum area of 36 square feet and minimum dimension of six feet.
  - (ii) For commercial buildings or residential buildings with seven or more units, building entry forecourts or front porches shall be a minimum of 100 square feet and a minimum width of 8 feet.

### (4) Ground Floor Residential Units

- (A) The finished floor of ground floor residential units, when adjacent to a public right-of-way, shall be within the minimum and maximum heights according to setback distance from back of walk identified in Figure 2. On sites with a cross slope greater than 2% along a building facade, the average height of the finished floor and back of walk shall be used. In flood zones, the minimum floor height shall be defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone elevation.
- (B) Ground floor units with a setback greater than 15 feet shall have at minimum an average of one tree per 40 linear feet of façade located in the building set back.

- (C) Ground floor residential entries shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet from the back of sidewalk.
- (D) Where no minimum building set back is required, all residential units shall be set back a minimum 5 feet from back of walk.
- (E) A minimum of 80% of the ground floor residential units that face a public right-of-way or publicly accessible path, or open space shall have a unit entry with direct access to the sidewalk, path, or open space. (Senior units or other deed-restricted units for special populations are exempt)

**Figure 2a: Finished Floor heights for ground floor residential units, calculation.**

$$\text{Formula: } y = \left(-\frac{4}{15}\right)(x) + \frac{16}{3}$$

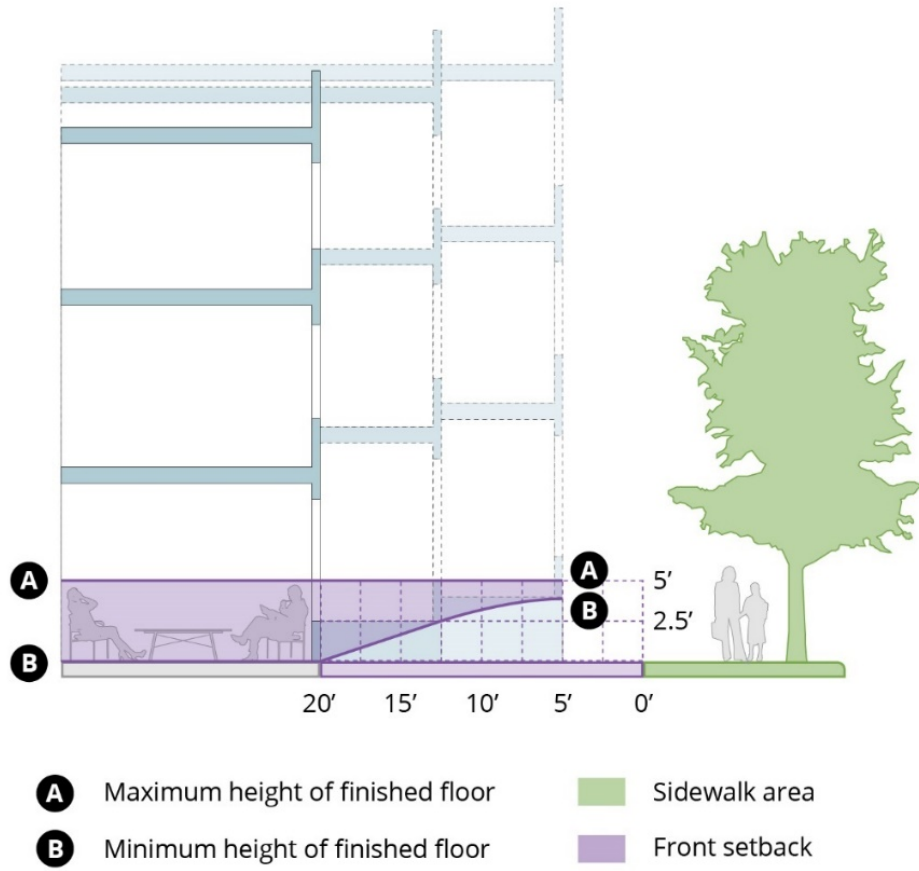
where  $y$  = ground floor finished floor height, in feet  
and  $x$  = setback distance from back of walk, in feet

Setback Length	Ground Floor Finished Floor Height (minimum)
5 ft*	4 ft
7.5 ft	3 ft 4 in
10 ft	2 ft 8 in
12.5 ft	2 ft
15 ft	1 ft 4 in
17.5 ft	8 in
20 ft	0 ft (grade)

*\*Per 18.24.040.(b)(4)(D), ground-floor residential units shall be set back a minimum 5 feet from back of walk.*

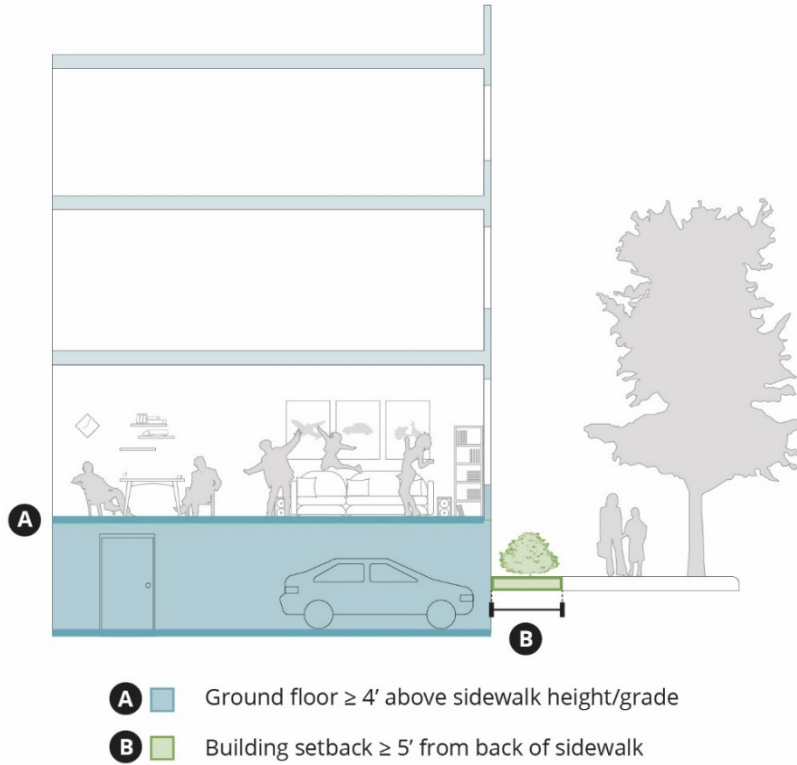
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Figure 2b: Finished Floor range for ground floor residential units.

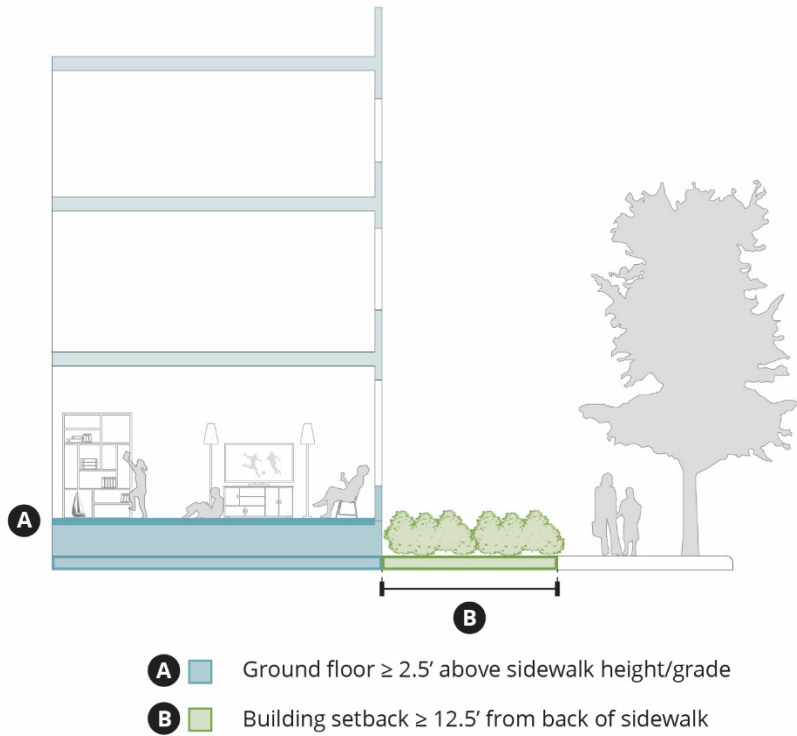


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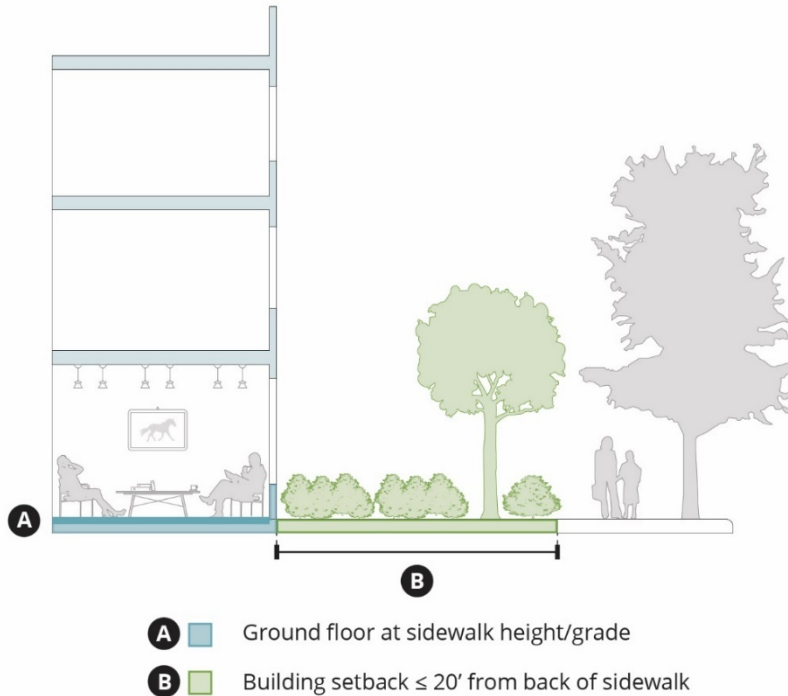
*Example 1: Finished floor height greater than 4 feet above sidewalk grade with minimum 5 feet setback.*



*Example 2: Finished floor height in the middle of the range.*



*Example 3: Finished floor height at sidewalk grade.*



(5) Front Yard Setback Character

Required setbacks shall provide a hardscape and/or landscaped area to create a transition between public and private space. The following standards apply, based on intended use and exclusive of areas devoted to outdoor seating, front porches, door swing of building entries, and publicly accessible open space:

- (A) Ground-floor retail or retail-like uses shall have a minimum of 10% of the required setback as landscaped area or planters.
- (B) Ground-floor residential uses shall have a minimum of 60% landscaped area in the required setback area.

**18.24.050 Building Massing**

(a) Intent Statement

To create buildings that are compatible with and enhance the surrounding area through the consideration of building scale, massing, and bulk. Massing should create a human-scale environment that is of high aesthetic quality and accommodates a variety of uses and design features. Building massing should include elements that:

- (1) Break down large building facades and massing to create a human-scaled building that enhances the context of the site
- (2) Are consistent in scale, mass and character to adjacent land uses and land use designations
- (3) Reinforce the definition and importance of the street

(4) Provide rooflines and massing that emphasize and accentuate significant elements of the building such as entries, bays, and balconies, and shading elements where appropriate.

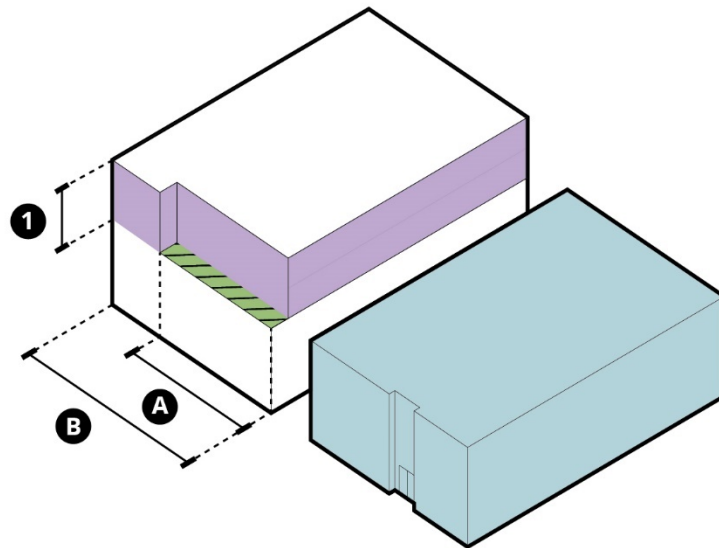
(5) Provide harmonious transitions between adjacent properties

(b) Objective Standards

(1) Upper Floor Step Backs

(A) When the height of the subject building is more than 20 feet above the average height (i.e., average of low and high roof elevations) of an adjacent building, an upper floor step back shall start within 2 vertical feet of the height of the adjacent building. The step back shall be a minimum depth of 6 feet along the primary building frontage, and the step shall occur for a minimum of 70% of the façade length.

(B) Notwithstanding, subsection (a), when adjacent to a single-story building, the upper floor step back shall occur between 33 and 37 feet in height.



- 1** Building height  $\geq$  20' above adjacent building
- A** Step back along  $\geq$  70% length of **B**
- B** Building frontage
- Step back area along primary facade

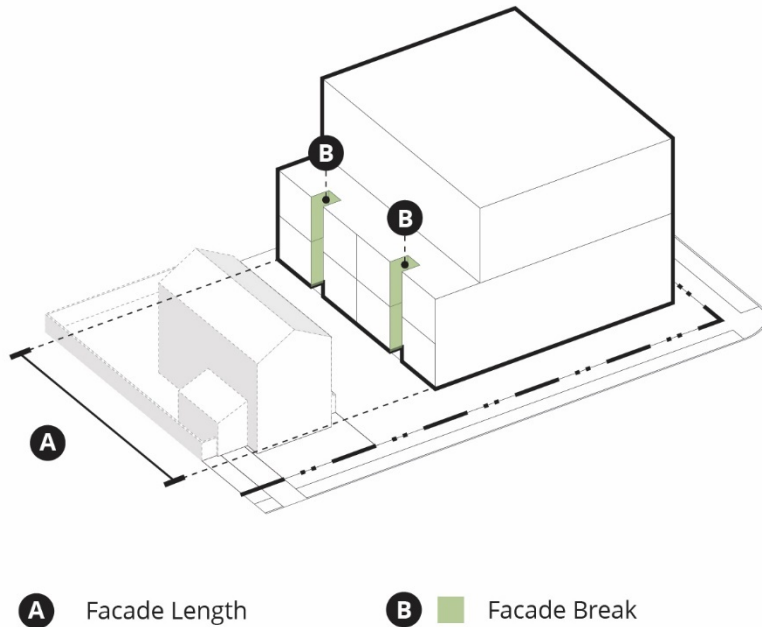
(2) Transition to Lower Density Building Types

When a building abuts a side and/or rear property line with a RE, RMD, R-1, or R-2 zoned parcel or a village residential or existing single-family residential use, the building shall break down the abutting façade by meeting all of the following standards:

(A) A landscape screen that includes a row of trees with a minimum 1 tree per 25 linear feet and continuous shrubbery planting. This screening plant material shall be a minimum 72 inches (6 feet) in height when planted. Required trees shall be minimum 24" box size.

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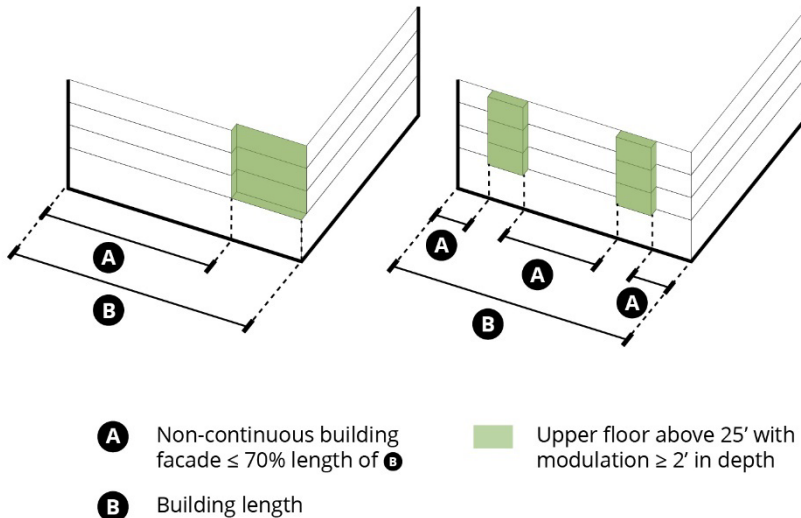
(B) A minimum façade break of four feet in width, two feet in depth, and 32 square feet of area for every 36 to 40 feet of façade length.



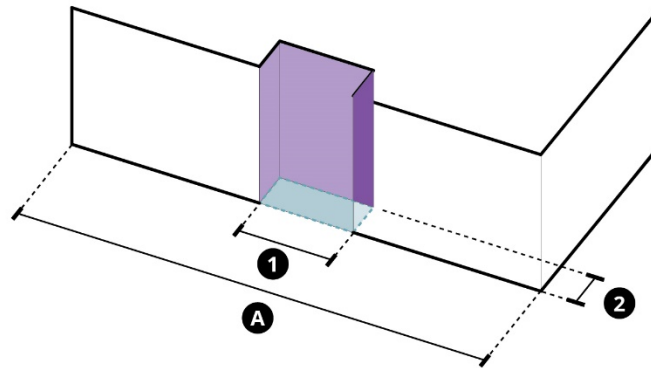
(C) Within 40 feet of an abutting structure, no more than 15% of the confronting façade area shall be windows or other glazing. Additional windows are allowed in order to maintain light, if they are fixed and fully obscured.

(3) Maximum Façade Length.

For portions of a building façade facing a public street, right-of-way, or publicly accessible path, any building greater than 25 feet in height and 70 feet in length shall not have a continuous façade plane greater than 70% of the façade length without an upper floor modulation, which can include bay windows. Upper floor façade modulations shall be a minimum 2 feet in depth, which can be a recess or a projection.



- (A) Buildings 250 feet in length or greater, which face a public street, right-of-way, or publicly accessible path, shall have at least one vertical façade break with a minimum area greater than 400 square feet and a width greater than or equal to two times the depth.
- (B) Buildings 150 to 250 feet in length, which face a public street, right-of-way, or publicly accessible path, shall have at least one vertical façade break with a minimum area greater than 64 square feet and a minimum width of 8 feet and minimum depth of 4 feet.



- A** Building facade
- Vertical façade break
- Facade break area
- 1** Facade break width
- 2** Facade break depth

(4) Special Conditions - Railroad Frontages

All parcels with lot lines abutting railroad rights-of-way shall meet the following standards on the railroad-abutting facade:

- (A) A minimum facade break of at least 10 feet in width and six feet in depth for every 60 feet of façade length.
- (B) For portion of a building 20 feet or greater in height, a maximum continuous façade length shall not exceed 60 feet.

**18.24.060 Façade Design**

(a) Intent Statement

To create cohesive and well-crafted building facades with human-scaled details that incorporate textures, colors, and other details that are compatible with and enhance the surrounding area. Facades should include the following elements:

- (1) Human-scaled detail, articulation, and craftsmanship
- (2) Quality of construction, craftsmanship, and design to create long lasting buildings
- (3) Expression of a human-scaled façade rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use
- (4) Fenestration that enhances the architectural character of the building
- (5) Defined building entry that is proportional to the building and number of people served
- (6) Articulation of the building shall break down the scale of the building via building modulation, façade articulation, and variation of fenestration and material patterns.



(b) Application

- (1) All facades shall meet all the required design standards and guidelines to ensure the same level of care and integrity throughout the building design.
- (2) Façade sidewalls located along a zero-lot line where, at time of approval are not visible from a right-of-way, are exempt.
- (3) Façade sidewalls located along a zero-lot line, where at time of approval are visible from a right-of-way, shall continue color, material, and pattern of the main façade.

(c) Objective Standards

(1) Base/Middle/Top

(A) Buildings three stories or taller and on lots wider than 50 feet shall be designed to differentiate a defined base or ground floor, a middle or body, and a top, cornice, or parapet cap. Each of these elements shall be distinguished from one another for a minimum of 80% of the façade length through use of two or more of the following four techniques:

(i) *Variation in building modulation (minimum of one, if option selected)*

- a. Horizontal shifts. Changes in floor plates that protrude and/or recess with a minimum dimension of two feet from the primary facade.

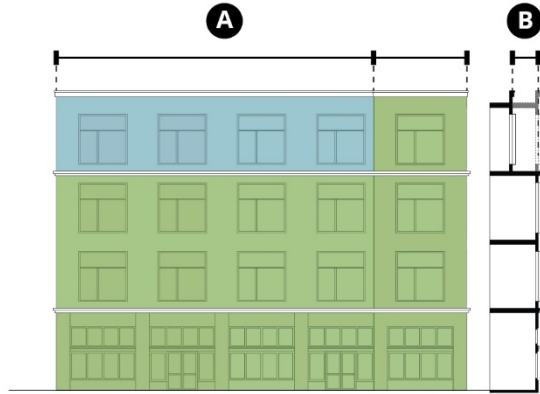


*Variation from Top to Middle*

- A** Horizontal shift from primary facade
- Primary Facade
- Recessed Facade

- b. Upper floor step backs. A horizontal step back of upper-floor façades with a minimum five-foot step back from the primary façade for a minimum of 80% of the length of the façade.

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- A** Step backs along  $\geq 80\%$  of facade length
- B** Upper floor step backed
- Recessed Facade

- c. Ground floor step back. A horizontal shift of the ground floor facade with a minimum depth of two feet for a minimum 80% of the length of the façade. Ground floor step backs shall not exceed the maximum setback requirements, where stated.



Variation from Bottom to Middle

- A** Building Step Back  Primary Facade
- B** Horizontal shift from primary facade  Recessed Facade

(ii) *Variation in facade articulation (minimum of one, if option selected)*

- a. *Variation in horizontal and/or vertical recesses or projections such as a pattern of recessed grouping of windows, recessed panels, bay windows or similar strategies as approved by the Director of Planning and Development*

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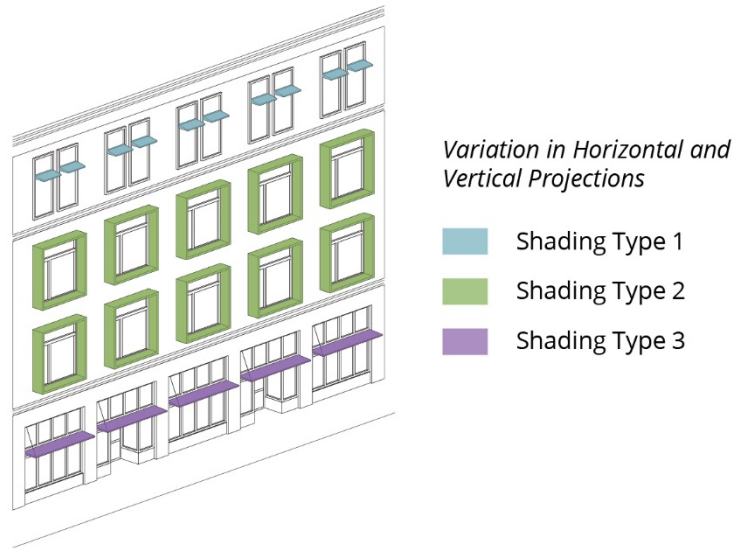
Services. The recess or projection shall be a minimum four inches in depth.



*Variation from Top to Middle + Middle to Bottom*

- A** Horizontal projection
- B** Vertical projection
- C** Horizontal recess


- b. *Variation in* horizontal and/or vertical projections such as shading and weather protection devices, decorative architectural details, or similar



- c. Datum lines that continue the length of the building, such as parapets or cornices, with a minimum four inches in height or a minimum two inches in depth and include a change in material;

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 Datum lines along the entire length of the building **and** with a change in material

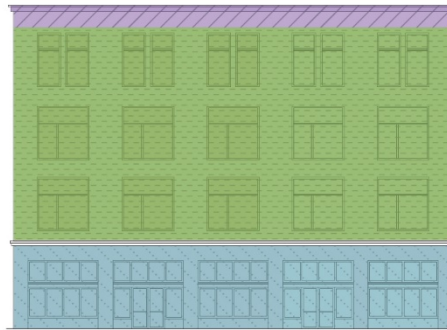
(iii) *Variation in at least two of the following: fenestration size, proportions, pattern, and depth or projection.*






*Variation in Fenetration Pattern*

-  Pattern A size and proportion
-  Pattern B size and proportion
-  Pattern C size and proportion

- (iv) *Variation in two of the following: façade material, material size, texture and pattern, or color.*



*Variation in two of the following on the primary facade*

-  Top material composition
-  Middle material composition
-  Base material composition

(2) **Façade Composition**

Building facades shall use a variety of strategies including building modulation, fenestration, and façade articulation to create visual interest and express a variety of scales through a variety of strategies. All facades shall include a minimum of two of the following façade articulation strategies to create visual interest:

- (i) Vertical and horizontal recesses such as a pattern of recessed grouping of windows, recessed panels, or similar strategies as approved by the Director of Planning and Development Services. The recess shall be a minimum four inches in depth.
- (ii) Vertical and horizontal projections such as shading and weather protection devices, decorative architectural details, or similar strategies as approved by the Director of Planning and Development Services. Projections shall be a minimum four inches in depth.
- (iii) Datum lines that continue the length of the building, such as cornices, with a minimum four inches in depth, or a minimum two inches in depth and include a change in material;
- (iv) Balconies, habitable projections, or Juliet balconies (every 20 to 40 feet) with a minimum four inches in depth;
- (v) Screening devices such as lattices, louvers, shading devices, perforated metal screens, or similar strategies as approved by the Director of Planning and Development Services; or
- (vi) Use of fine-grained building materials, such as brick or wood shingles, not to exceed eight inches in either height or width.

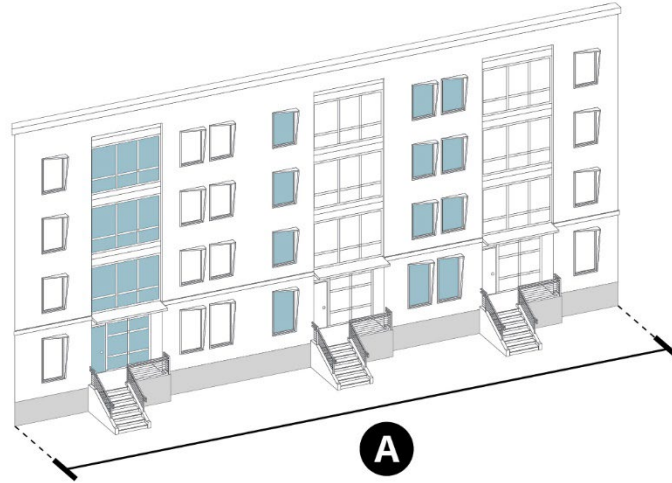
(3) **Compatible Rhythm and Pattern**

(A) Buildings shall express a vertical rhythm and pattern that reflects the size and scale of a housing unit and/or individual rooms and spaces. This may be achieved with building modulation to create vertically oriented facades (height greater than the width of the façade), façade articulation and fenestration repetitive vertically

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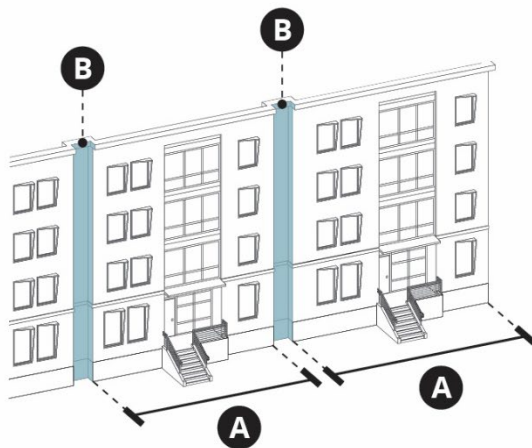
oriented patterns. Depending on the length of the façade, the following standards apply:

- (i) For continuous façades less than 100 feet in length, the façade shall have vertically oriented patterns of vertical recesses or projections, façade articulation, and/or fenestration.



**A** Façade length  $\leq 100'$        Vertically oriented patterns

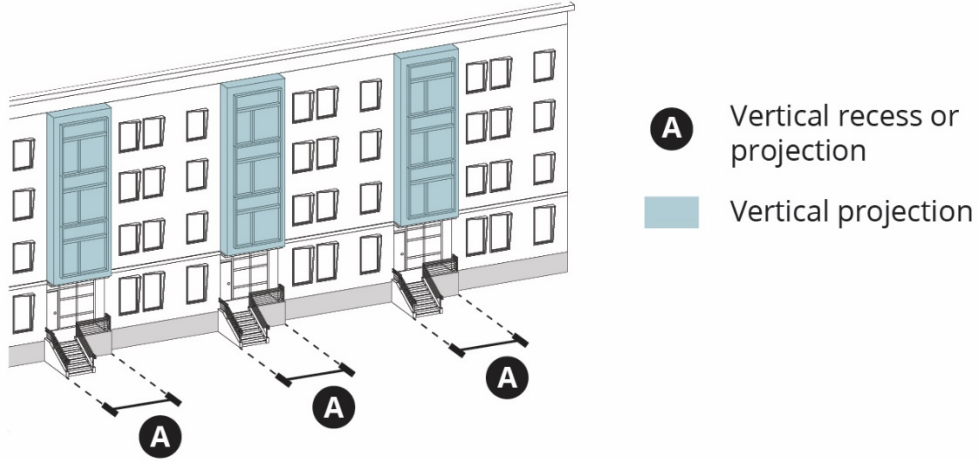
- (ii) For continuous façades 100 feet or greater in length, the façade shall include either:
  - a. A vertical recess or change in façade plane with a minimum 2 feet deep vertical shift modulation for a minimum 4 feet in width to establish a vertical rhythm or a unit between 20 to 50 feet in width; or



**A** Vertical rhythm  
**B** Vertical shift modulation  
 Vertically oriented patterns

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- b. A vertical recess or projection with a minimum depth of 2 feet that establishes the vertical rhythm housing units or individual rooms between 10 to 16 feet in width.

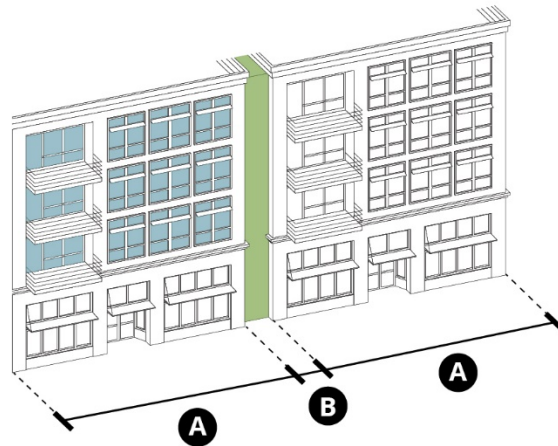


- (B) Residential mixed-use buildings shall express a vertical rhythm and pattern by meeting at least one of the following standards:
  - (i) Vertical Patterns and Modulation: Facades shall use vertical patterns of building modulation, façade articulation, and fenestration.



- (ii) Horizontal Patterns and Modulation: Facades that use horizontal articulation and fenestration patterns shall use a vertical massing strategy with a minimum four feet wide and two feet deep vertical shift in modulation at least once every 50 feet of façade length.

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- A** Facade with horizontal articulation and fenestration pattern  $\leq 50'$
- B** Vertical shift in modulation  $\geq 4'$
- Horizontal articulation and fenestration pattern

- (C) Storefront uses shall express a vertical rhythm not to exceed 30 to 50 feet in width.
- (4) Emphasize Building Elements and Massing

(A) Building Entries Within Façade Design

- (i) Primary building entries shall be scaled proportionally to the number of people served (amount of floor-area or number of units accessed). Building entries inclusive of doorway and facade plane shall meet the following minimum dimensions:
  - a. Individual residential entries: five feet in width
  - b. Shared residential entry, such as mixed-use buildings: 8 feet in width
  - c. Commercial building entry: 20 feet in width
  - d. Storefront entry: six feet in width

- (ii) Primary building entries (not inclusive of individual residential entries) shall include a façade modulation that includes at least one of the following:
  - a. A recess or projection from the primary façade plane with a minimum depth of two feet.

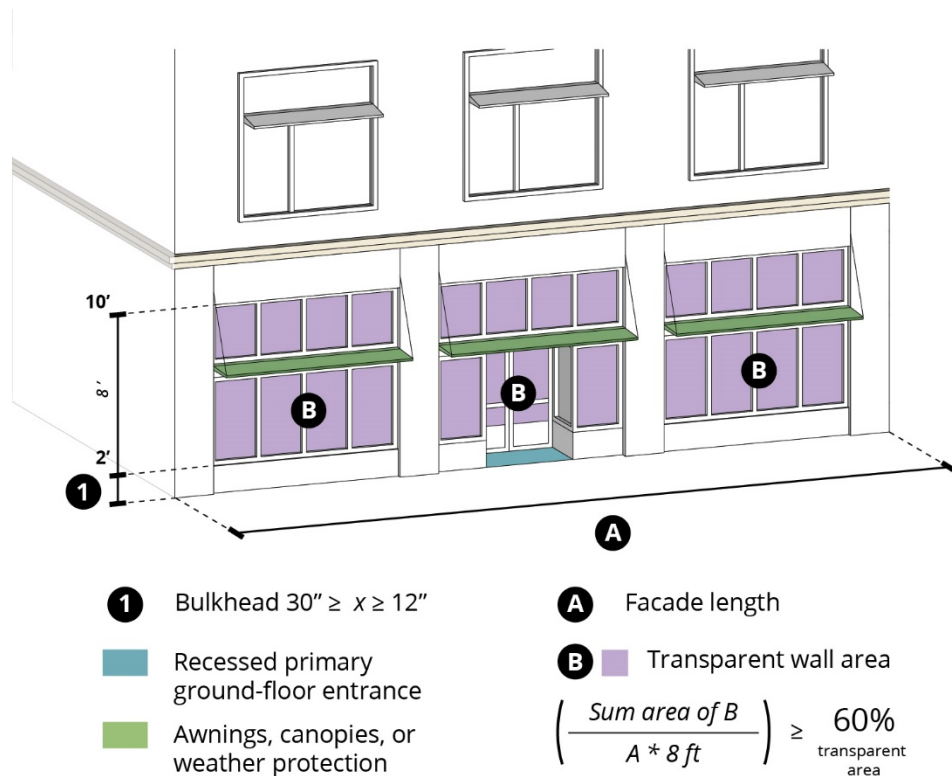
- (B) Primary entries shall include weather protection that is a minimum 4 feet wide and 4 feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning or using a combination of these methods.

(5) Storefront/Retail Ground Floors

- (A) Ground floor height shall be a minimum 14 feet floor-to-floor or shall maintain a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor datum line of an abutting building-
- (B) Transparency shall include a minimum 60 percent transparent glazing between 2 and 10 feet in height from sidewalk, providing unobstructed views into the commercial space.



- (C) Bulkheads and solid base walls: If provided, shall measure between 12 and 30 inches from finished grade
- (D) Primary entries shall include weather protection that is a minimum 6 feet wide and 4 feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning or using a combination of these methods.
- (E) Awnings, canopies and weather protection:
  - (i) When transom windows are above display windows, awnings, canopies and similar, weather protection elements shall be installed between transom and display windows. These elements should allow for light to enter the storefront through the transom windows and allow the weather protection feature to shade the display window.
  - (ii) Awnings may be fixed or retractable.

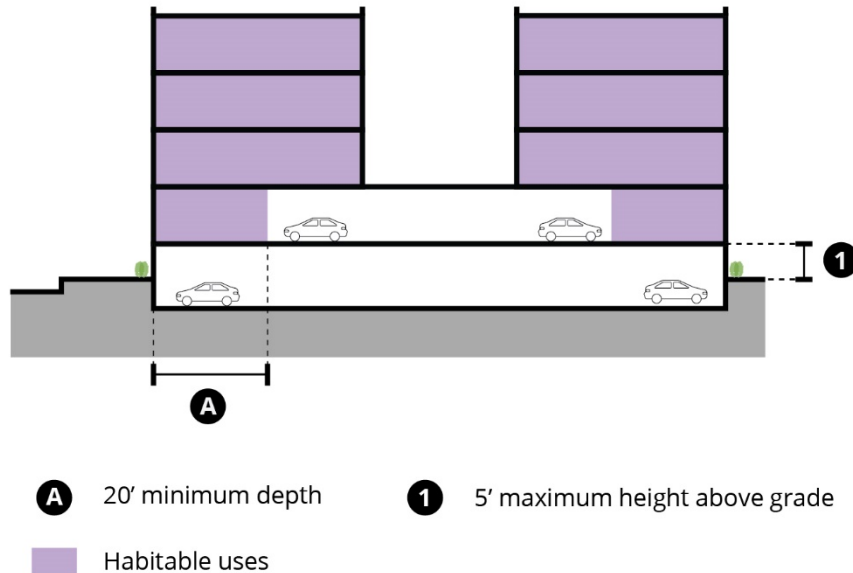


(6) Other Non-residential Ground Floors

- (A) Ground floor height shall be a minimum 14 feet floor-to-floor or shall match the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor datum line of an abutting building.
- (B) Transparency shall include a minimum 50 percent transparent glazing between 4 and 10 feet in height from sidewalk or terrace grade.
- (C) Primary entries shall include weather protection that is a minimum 6 feet wide and 4 feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning or using a combination of these methods.

(7) Parking/Loading/Utilities

- (A) Entry Size: No more than 25% of the site frontage facing a street should be devoted to garage openings, carports, surface parking, loading entries, or utilities access (on sites with less than 100 feet of frontage, no more than 25 feet)
- (B) Above grade structured parking levels facing a public right-of-way or publicly accessible open space/path, with the exception of vehicular alleys, shall be lined with commercial or habitable uses with a minimum depth of 20 feet.
- (C) Partially sub-grade parking shall not have an exposed façade that exceeds five feet in height above abutting grade at back of sidewalk.
- (D) Partially sub-grade parking shall be screened with continuous landscaping and shrubbery with minimum height of 3 feet and be within 10 feet of the sub-grade parking.



**18.24.070 Residential Entries**

(a) Intent Statement

Private entries into ground floor residential units shall be designed to provide:

- (1) human-scaled detailing
- (2) enhanced pedestrian experience
- (3) transition between public and private space
- (4) spaces for residents to gather and spend time outdoors
- (5) resident privacy

(b) Objective Standards

(1) Ground Floor Unit Entries: Where ground floor residential unit entries are required, one or more of the following entry types shall be provided:

(A) Stoop:

- (i) Stoops shall provide entry access for a maximum of two units; and
- (ii) Stoop heights shall be within 1 step of finished floor height of adjacent unit; and

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- (iii) Stoop entry landings shall be a minimum 5 feet in depth; and
- (iv) The maximum stoop height from the back of sidewalk grade shall be 5 feet.



- Ground floor residential entry
- Entry landing
- A** 5' maximum height above sidewalk grade
- B** 5' minimum depth

**(B) Porch:**

- (i) Porches shall provide entry access for a maximum of one unit; and
- (ii) Porch heights shall be within 1 step of finished floor height of adjacent unit; and
- (iii) Porches shall be large enough so a 6-foot by 6-foot square can fit inside of a porch for each unit; and
- (iv) The maximum porch floor height from the back of sidewalk grade shall be 5 feet.



**(C) Patio Entry**

- (i) Patio entries may serve up to two units; and
- (ii) Patios shall be large enough so a 5-foot by 5-foot square can fit inside of the patio for each unit; and

- (iii) The Patio shall include at least one of the following features to define the transition between public and private space:
- a. A row of shrubs not exceeding 42 inches in height located between the sidewalk and the patio that assists with defining the edge between public and private space. Shrubs shall be at least one gallon in size and be planted a maximum of three feet on center; or
  - b. A fence not to exceed 36 inches in height located between the sidewalk and the patio that assists with defining the edge between public and private space, with a gate or fence opening to provide access to the pedestrian route between the pedestrian way and the front door; or
  - c. A metal, wood or stone wall not to exceed 36 inches in height located between the sidewalk and the patio that assists with defining the edge between public and private space with a gate or wall opening to provide access to the pedestrian route between the pedestrian way and the front door. A minimum 18-inch landscape strip shall be located between the wall and the abutting pedestrian way and entirely landscaped with ground cover, shrubs or other landscape living plant material.



(D) Terrace:

- (i) A Terrace may serve multiple unit entries; and
- (ii) The maximum Terrace height shall be 30 inches above the grade of the back of the adjacent sidewalk or accessway; and
- (iii) Walls, fences and hedges on Terraces shall be a maximum of 42 inches tall and have a minimum transparency of 40 percent.

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(E) Frontage Court:

- (i) A Frontage Court may serve multiple unit entries; and
- (ii) The minimum Frontage Court width along a primary frontage shall be 25 feet; and
- (iii) The maximum Frontage Court width along a primary frontage shall be 50 percent of the facade length or 80 feet, whichever is less; and
- (iv) The minimum Frontage Court depth shall be 25 feet; and
- (v) The maximum Frontage Court depth shall be 50 feet or a ratio not to exceed 2:1 depth to width.



### **18.24.080 Open Space**

#### **(a) Intent**

To ensure that residents and visitors have access to usable open space and common facilities that provide recreational opportunities, promote a healthy environment, and enhance the experience of living in Palo Alto. Common and private open spaces should include the following characteristics:

- (1) Be integrated into the site access and building circulation strategy
- (2) Be generous in dimension to provide usable space
- (3) Provide landscape elements that will support the health of the plants and enhance the character of place
- (4) Promote public health
- (5) Be located to provide easy access to private and common building areas, protected from the activities of commercial areas, and balance privacy and noise impacts to neighboring uses
- (6) Promote sustainable practices and opportunities for green infrastructure
- (7) Promote community safety through eyes on the street

#### **(b) Objective Standards**

##### **(1) Private Open Space**

If Private Open Spaces is provided, it shall meet the following standards:

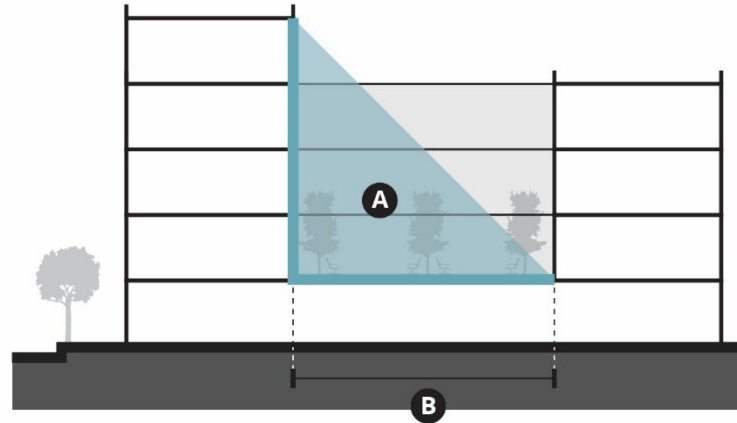
- (A) Floor area shall include a clear space with a minimum dimension of a circle with a six-foot diameter.
- (B) Minimum clear height dimension of 8'-6" feet
- (C) Be accessed directly from a residential unit
- (D) Balconies shall not be located within the daylight plane
- (E) Notwithstanding subsection (a), ground floor patios shall meet the following minimum requirements:
  - (i) RM-20 and RM-30 districts: Minimum 100 square feet of area, the least dimension of which is eight feet for at least 75% of the area
  - (ii) RM-40 districts: Minimum 80 square feet of area, the least dimension of which is six feet for at least 75% of the area
  - (iii) Street facing private open space on the ground floor shall meet the finished floor height for ground floor residential standards in section 18.24.040(b)(4)

##### **(2) If Common Open Space is provided, it shall meet the following standards:**

- (A) Minimum size of 200 square feet
- (B) Area shall include a space with a minimum dimension of a circle with a 10-foot diameter.
- (C) A minimum of 60% of the area shall be open to the sky and free of permanent weather protection or encroachments. Trellises and similar open-air features are permitted.
- (D) Notwithstanding subsection (1), courtyards enclosed on four sides shall have a minimum dimension of 40 feet and have a minimum courtyard width to building height ratio of 1:1.25



\*NOT YET APPROVED\*



- A** Minimum courtyard width to building height ratio of 1:1.25      **B** 40' minimum dimension

- (E) Include places to sit
- (F) A minimum 20% of landscaping
- (G) Soil Depth: Planting in above grade courtyards shall have a minimum soil depth of 12 inches for ground cover, 20 inches for shrubs, and 36 inches for trees.
- (H) Rooftop Open Space:
  - (i) In order to qualify as usable open space, a rooftop garden shall meet the requirements set forth in Section 18.40.230.
  - (ii) Rooftop open spaces may fulfill usable open space requirements in the following districts:
    - a. CD-C sites that do not abut a single- or two-family residential use or zoning district, rooftop gardens may qualify as usable open space and may count as up to 75% of the required usable open space for the residential component of a project.
    - a. For CN and CS sites on El Camino Real and CC(2) sites that do not abut a single- or two-family residential use or zoning district, rooftop gardens may qualify as usable open space and may count as up to 60% of the required usable open space for the residential component of a project.

### 18.24.090 Materials

#### (a) Intent Statement

To promote the use of high quality, durable, sustainable, and attractive materials that exhibit a sense of permanence and contribute to the aesthetic quality of the development and to the urban design fabric of the community.

#### (b) Objective Standards

##### (1) Façade Materials.

Primary, secondary, and accent materials are allowed or prohibited as in the Residential and Residential Mixed-use Material List, which may be updated from time to time by the Director of Planning with a recommendation by the ARB.

List provided for informational purposes; will be posted to City's website and not codified by ordinance.

**Residential and Residential Mixed-use Material List**

<i>Material</i>	<i>Maximum Usage % of façade area</i>
Brick (full dimensional)	100%
Stone/masonry	100%
Stucco/Cement Plaster	100%
Glass (transparent, spandrel)	100%
Finished wood, wood veneer, engineered wood, and wood siding	100%
Factory or naturally finished flat, profiled, fluted, or ribbed metal panels	100%
Fiber reinforced cement siding and panels	100%
Terracotta	100%
Concrete (poured in place or precast)	35%
Concrete blocks with integral color (ground, polished, or glazed finishes)	35%
Concrete blocks with integral color (split face finish)	35%
Ceramic tile	35%
Standing seam metal	35%
Three Dimensional Glass	5%
Corrugated metal	5%
Vegetated wall panels or trellises	5%
Vinyl siding	Not Permitted
T-111 Plywood	Not Permitted
Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EIFS)	Not Permitted
Plastic or vinyl fencing	Not Permitted
Chain link fencing	Not Permitted



### **18.24.100 Sustainability and Green Building Design**

#### **(a) Intent Statement**

To incorporate sustainability, green building, and environmental considerations into the project design and construction. Green building design aims for compatibility with the local environment: to protect, respect and benefit from it. In general, sustainable buildings are energy efficient, water conserving, durable and nontoxic, with high-quality spaces and high recycled content materials. The following considerations should be included in site and building design:

- (1) Optimize building orientation for thermal comfort, shading, daylighting, and natural ventilation, including operable windows
- (2) Design landscaping to create comfortable micro-climates and reduce heat island effects
- (3) Design landscaping with native species
- (4) Maximize onsite stormwater management through landscaping and permeable pavement
- (5) Use sustainable building materials
- (6) Design lighting, plumbing and equipment for efficient energy use
- (7) Create healthy indoor environments
- (8) Use creativity and innovation to build more sustainable environments. One example is establishing gardens with edible fruits, vegetables or other plants to satisfy a portion of project open space requirements

#### **(b) Objective Standards**

See Chapter 16.14: California Green Building Standards additional requirements for green building and sustainable design. Notwithstanding Section 18.24.010(c), these regulations may not be modified through alternative compliance.

**SECTION 3.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each and every section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of the Ordinance would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

**SECTION 4.** The Council finds that this Ordinance represents the implementation of adopted plans and policy. Therefore, the Ordinance are exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and/or covered by the CEQA documents prepared for the City of Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan 2030. The project aims to facilitate implementation of State law. The project does not propose to increase development beyond what was analyzed in the Comprehensive Plan.

**SECTION 5.** This Ordinance shall be effective on the thirty-first date after the date of its adoption.

PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_

Assistant City Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_

Director of Planning and  
Development Services