



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 11703)

Report Type: Study Session **Meeting Date:** 11/19/2020

Summary Title: ARB Review of Objective Standards

Title: Study Session for ARB Review of Draft Objective Standards
(Continued from 10/15/20)

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Architectural Review Board (ARB):

1. Review the draft objective standards that would modify Title 18 (Zoning Ordinance) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC); and
2. Provide feedback to staff and consultants.

Report Summary

The State legislature has made several changes to State housing laws in recent years to streamline housing approvals. Specifically, the legislature has taken steps to reduce the amount of subjective discretion jurisdictions have to deny or reduce the density of residential and residential mixed-use projects. Instead, in certain contexts, jurisdictions must rely on objective design and development standards.

This project aims to respond to State law by making changes to the Zoning Ordinance (Title 18). The project will revise subjective standards, namely the Context-Based Design Criteria, transforming them into objective standards. This represents a new way that projects will be reviewed by Planning staff and the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

Background

SB2 Funding and Project Purpose

This project, development of objective standards, is funded by Senate Bill 2 (SB2). SB2 provides local governments with grants and technical assistance to prepare plans and process improvements that:

- streamline housing approvals;
- facilitate housing affordability; and/or
- accelerate housing production.

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The City of Palo Alto developed a grant proposal to streamline housing approvals through process improvements, namely the development of objective standards. The project will amend the Zoning Ordinance to simplify and clarify standards and guidelines for staff, decision-makers, and applicants.

Applicability

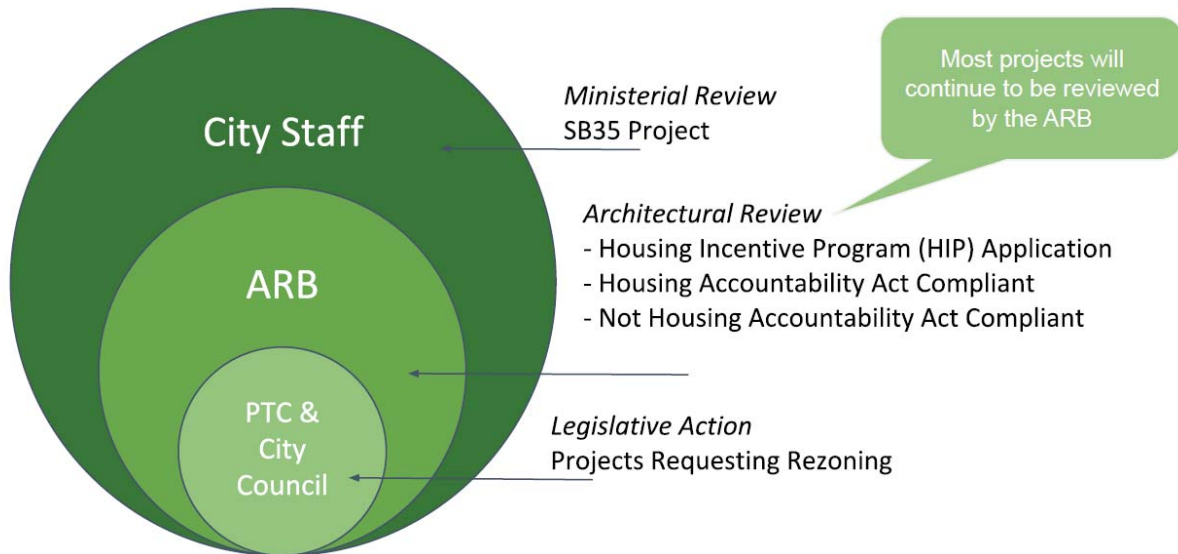
This project primarily addresses multifamily housing and residential mixed-use projects and districts. Ground-floor retail guidelines and standards are addressed insofar as retail is required as part of a mixed-use residential project. Commercial-only projects would also be subject to applicable standards; standards, such as residential open space and residential entry standards would not apply.

Objective standards in Title 18 currently do and will continue to apply to all projects, including multi-family (three or more units) and single-family residential (when located in mixed use or multifamily districts), accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and commercial projects. Similarly, any objective standards in the Comprehensive Plan, coordinated area plans, and other adopted policy documents likewise apply to all projects, as appropriate for their use and zoning district.

Relationship to State Housing Laws

Several State housing laws rely upon objective standards and emphasize the need for this SB2 project. The following paragraphs summarize the laws, which, when layered together, create the policy context within which Palo Alto must develop its objective standards. Chart 1 illustrates how the City, including the ARB, reviews these different types of multifamily and mixed-use projects. Regardless of the level of review, all these project types will be evaluated for their compliance with objective standards.

Chart 1: Project Review Process for Multifamily and Residential Mixed-Use Projects



Housing Accountability Act

Originally passed in 1982, the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) (Government Code Section 65589.5) acknowledges the lack of housing as a critical problem in California. The HAA applies to all "housing development projects" which the State defines as: "residential units; mixed-use developments (with at least two-thirds of the square footage designated for residential use), and transitional or supportive housing." The City's interpretation is that the HAA applies to projects with two or more residential units.

The HAA states that a city cannot disapprove a project, reduce its density, or otherwise make a project infeasible, when the project complies with objective standards. However, if an applicant seeks an exception to an objective standard, the project—or at least the non-conforming element of the project—is no longer covered by the HAA. Decision-makers may then rely on the findings required or criteria for approval of that specific modification. In such a case, subjective standards and design guidelines can be used to evaluate projects.

SB35 Project Streamlining

Under SB35 (Government Code Section 65913.4), the following project types are eligible for streamlined review process:

- projects with at least 2/3 residential floor area,
- projects which meet certain affordability requirements, and
- projects that are consistent with the City's zoning and other "objective standards."

In Palo Alto, SB35 applies to a limited number of projects. The project must include at least 50% of the units as affordable to low-income households. Under SB35, the review process is 90 to 180 days depending on the project size. The project is not subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is not subject to discretionary review (e.g.,

Architectural Review, Site and Design Review, requiring review by the ARB, PTC, or Council). Changes to objective standards would affect these projects.

SB330 Permit Review

Effective January 1, 2020, SB330 made several changes to existing State housing law, including the HAA and Permit Streamlining Act. For the purposes of the work described herein, the important elements are as follows:

- Prohibits jurisdictions from imposing (on housing projects) subjective design standards established after January 1, 2020.
- Requires that jurisdictions only subject a housing development project to review pursuant to the ordinances, policies, and standards adopted and in effect when a preliminary application is submitted (vs. when it is deemed complete).
- Limits jurisdictions to five public hearings.
- Prohibits jurisdictions from enacting development policies, standards or conditions that would change current zoning and land use designations where housing is an allowable use. In such cases, the City cannot lessen the intensity of housing—such as reducing height, density, or floor area ratio, requiring new or increased open space, lot size, setbacks, or frontage, or limiting maximum lot coverage. (Effectively, this clause prohibits downzoning, though the City may rebalance density between various districts.)

Summary

State law relies more and more on projects' compliance with objective standards. Therefore, this project aims to strengthen objective standards to identify the City's design and development priorities. In this way, the project seeks to ensure applicants' compliance with these priorities to facilitate the development of housing. Furthermore, this project allows the City to comply with recently passed legislation requiring objective standards and streamlined approval processes.

Summary of Public Meetings

ARB Study Sessions – December 5, 2019 and February 6, 2020

Staff and consultants met with the ARB in December 2019¹ and in February 2020.² The presentations provided an overview of the project and a description of key issues and discussed options and recommendations for how to implement the project goals. On February 6, staff and consultants presented issues, options, and recommendations for how the City can implement the requirements of State law with respect to objective standards. The ARB

¹ December 5, 2019 ARB Staff Report: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/74248>, Minutes: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/74670>, Video: <https://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-74-1252019/>

² February 6, 2020 ARB Staff Report: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/75075>, Minutes: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/75703>, Video: <https://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-74-262020/>

expressed a range of opinions on how to address State requirements and a range of responses to staff and consultant ideas:

1. Overly Prescriptive: Most board members were concerned that design standards will be overly prescriptive and restrict the influence of time, character, and context on enabling high quality and appropriate design.
2. Conservative vs. Flexible Approach: Some board members supported the concept of creating strict standards (e.g., zero shadows cast; only materials allowing certain materials such as brick and glass) but allowing exceptions if an applicant agrees to go through architectural review. Other board members were concerned that this would restrict housing production altogether. Still other board members supported flexible options, such as a menu of choices or a minimum/maximum range.
3. Flexibility for Affordable Housing: Generally, board members supported flexibility for 100% affordable housing projects, especially regarding building materials.
4. Basic Good Design Principles: Generally, board members supported objective standards for general design principles, such as regulating massing, façade length, articulation, connectivity within large sites, and entrance locations.
5. Addressing Transitions: Generally, board members wanted regulations to address issues of transition between heights and uses (i.e., make context and compatibility guidelines into standards). However, they recognized that this is challenging as a one-size-fits-all standard and would like standards to consider land use and/or location.

PTC Study Session – May 13, 2020

Staff and consultants met with the PTC in May 2020 to provide an overview of the project, key issues, policy options, and the ARB's recommendations.³ The PTC provided the following feedback to staff and consultants:

1. Commissioners supported transforming context-based design criteria into objective standards, as a way to express the City's design values.
2. Commissioners supported reorganizing the code to reduce redundancies and make it easier to find regulations that apply to a parcel and making other subjective regulations objective.
3. Commissioners expressed mixed opinions about using graphics in the code: some really like graphics, others worried that they may lead applicants down a certain path.
4. Commissioners were generally interested in making changes to the overlay districts (AH, WH, PTOD) to be more streamlined (e.g., by right, if criteria are met), but were concerned about losing the opportunity for public input and Council review.

³ May 13, 2020 PTC Staff Report: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/76583>, Minutes: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/77132>, Video: <https://midpenmedia.org/planning-transportation-commission-63-5132020/>

5. Commissioners shared a concern that new design standards could lead to projects looking the same throughout the city and across neighborhoods; also, that developers may always choose the same (least expensive option) in the menu of options.
6. Commissioners agreed that if an ARB/PTC joint subcommittee is too challenging, they would like to have a joint meeting with the ARB.
7. At least one commissioner had the following ideas/suggestions:
 - desire to know what other cities are doing
 - desire for more form-based code
 - more info about what the ARB thinks about this
 - desire to ask former ARB members and/or local architects to review these draft standards (another PTC member specifically disagreed)
 - desire to standardize conditions of approval

ARB Subcommittee – Summer 2020

The ARB formed a subcommittee, composed of Board members Thompson and Hirsch, to workshop the draft standards. The Subcommittee reviewed and provided written comments on preliminary versions of the standards. The Subcommittee also met with staff and consultants over a series of three video calls to discuss and debate the format, organization, intent statements, and specific language of the draft standards.

Discussion & Analysis

Attachment #1 contains the draft standards and related graphics. Staff and consultants have revised the current Context-Based Design Criteria into a stand-alone set of standards which would be codified as Chapter 18.24. The Context-Based Design Criteria would be eliminated from the code with approval of these standards. The ARB findings would remain in Title 18.76. The ARB would continue to use these findings to evaluate projects that do not require compliance with objective standards (e.g., 100% commercial projects, projects that do not comply with the Housing Accountability Act).

Table 1 identifies the topical sections for the new Chapter 18.24. These topics can generally be categorized into three areas.

1. Administration: Describes the purpose and applicability of the design standards, including the relevant zoning districts, and defines terms that are specific to this chapter.
2. Site Design: Identifies standards related to the interface between the building and public realm, including sidewalks, driveways, access, entries, and building orientation.
3. Building Design: Identifies standards related to the building itself, including bulk/massing, facades, secondary entries, on-site open space, and potentially materials.

Table 1: Design Standards Organization, by Topic

<i>Category</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Administration	18.24.010: Purpose and Applicability

Site Design	18.24.020: Public Realm/Sidewalk Character
	18.24.030: Site Access
	18.24.040: Building Orientation and Setbacks
Building Design	18.24.050: Building Massing
	18.24.060: Façade Design
	18.24.070: Residential Entries
	18.24.080: Open Space
	18.24.090: Materials (TBD)

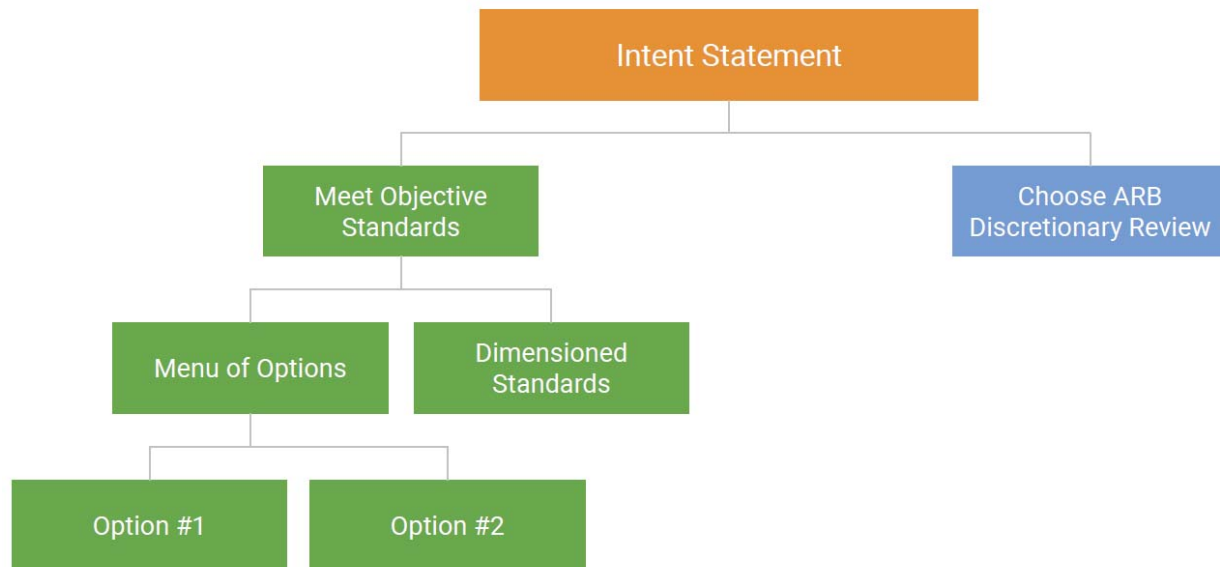
Each of the topics above is broken into two sections: (1) an intent statement and (2) a set of objective standards.

1. The **intent statements** represent overarching guidelines for each topic, are subjective, and often include verbatim language from the Context-Based Design Criteria and/or ARB findings.
2. The **objective standards** are ratios, measurements, percentages, or otherwise clear criteria. Some standards are written as a menu of options, providing choices for how they may be met. Standards have been devised based on staff and consultant experience with designing and reviewing multifamily and residential mixed-use projects.

Based on feedback from the ARB and ARB Subcommittee, the proposed design standards aim to strike a balance between prescriptiveness and flexibility. The objective design standards are intended to lead to buildings with good design principles and an acceptable level of articulation and detail. However, because these standards are objective, they cannot anticipate all different types of buildings and unique architectural designs. Instead, the draft design standards propose an alternate path for compliance.

If architects/applicants do not want to meet or cannot meet the objective standard—for whatever reason—they may instead choose to meet the “intent statement.” In choosing this path, the applicant is choosing to undergo ARB discretionary review. The ARB then makes the determination about whether or not the proposed project meets the intent of the code section. If a project does meet the objective standards for a particular topic, it automatically meets the intent statement for that section. These two paths toward compliance are identified in Chart 2.

Chart 2: Two Paths of Compliance: Objective and Discretionary



Discussion Questions

The Subcommittee suggested several topics for further discussion. The following topics/questions are intended to guide this discussion:

1. **Base/Middle/Top (18.24.060(C)(i)):** The existing Context-Based Design Criteria call for buildings to be designed with a base, body, and roof or parapet edge. The draft code transforms this traditional architectural guideline into a standard. Notably, projects that do not comply with this standard, such as a Modernist minimalist design, would need to go through architectural review with the ARB to meet the intent for façade design.

Is this an acceptable transformation?

2. **Façade Length (18.24.050(C)):** The existing Pedestrian and Transit Oriented Design (PTOD) overlay Context-Based Design Criteria includes a standard limiting façade length to 70% of the façade and 100 continuous feet. This draft code expands the applicability of this standard to the rest of the city.

Is this acceptable? Should buildings be permitted to have a continuous façade of more than 100 feet/70% of the total façade before a notch or setback is required?

3. **Height Transitions (18.24.050(B)):** Many of the Context-Based Design Criteria relate to contextual and compatible height and massing guidelines, which are subjective criteria. District regulations already include objective daylight plane requirements to facilitate height transitions between higher and lower density districts. The draft code proposes additional standards and options for regulating transitions.

Is the daylight plane sufficient to regulate transitions or should the code provide for other compliance options?

4. **Articulation & Massing Strategy (18.24.060(C)(iii)):** The Compatible Rhythm and Pattern section illustrates acceptable horizontal articulation and vertical massing strategies through a series of diagrams.

Do these standards and diagrams represent acceptable baseline standards for quality buildings?

5. **Materials (18.24.090):** During its February 2020 meeting, ARB members expressed concern about regulating materials, especially for below-market rate projects. The draft code includes an example section of how materials could be regulated.

Does the ARB want to pursue a similar strategy?

6. **Commercial-Only Uses:** The intent statements are broadly written to apply to all project types, including residential and commercial projects. Commercial-only projects would only be subject to applicable standards; for example, standards related to residential lobby entries and residential open space would not apply.

Do the intent statements and standards, as proposed, generally make sense for commercial-only projects?

7. **Format of Code:** *Is the overall format and structure of the draft code understandable and acceptable?*

Next Steps

Based on feedback from the ARB, staff and consultants will prepare a revised draft ordinance to share with the ARB and PTC at a subsequent joint meeting this fall. This joint meeting has yet to be scheduled.

Environmental Review

The ordinance revisions represent implementation of adopted plans and policy. Therefore, the revisions are exempt under CEQA and/or covered by the CEQA documents prepared for the Comprehensive Plan. 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.

Public Notification, Outreach & Comments

The Palo Alto Municipal Code does not require noticing of study sessions; however, this item was published in a local paper, *Daily Post*, on October 2, 2020, which is 13 days in advance of the meeting.

Public Comments

As of the writing of this report, no project-related, public comments were received.

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Attachments:

- Attachment A: 18.24 DRAFT Objective Design Standards (PDF)

⁴ Emails may be sent directly to the ARB using the following address: arb@cityofpaloalto.org

PALO ALTO OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

Context-Based Design Criteria

WORKING DRAFT FOR ARB REVIEW

Last updated October 8, 2020

This document outlines the topics and potential design standards and guidelines for a new Chapter (18.24) of the Palo Alto Zoning Ordinance. This draft chapter represents a rewrite of the Palo Alto Context-Based Design Criteria and other parts of Title 18 as objective standards. The draft standards are based on the specific language of the existing design criteria, but the chapter reorganizes the content into Site Design and Building Design standards and further subtopics described on the following page.

This is a working document that is to be read alongside the *List of Guidelines to Transform*, which documents the existing Context-Based Design Criteria. The draft standards below will be revised by the ARB, PTC, and Council over the course of the project to transform subjective design criteria into reasonable design standards that support the City's priorities for design and development.

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18.24.060 Façade Design.....	13
18.24.070 Residential Entries	23
18.24.080 Open Space.....	25
18.24.090 Materials	27

There are several design-related topics located elsewhere in Title 18, which may be relocated to this new chapter. This includes 18.23.050: Visual, Screening and Landscaping and 18.23.030: Lighting.

There are several topics that the ARB Subcommittee, City staff, and consultants have raised that are not currently described in depth in the current context-based design criteria. These topics could be considered through a separate project and include:

1. Fenestration
2. Sustainability (note: elements of sustainability are embedded in various topics below)
3. Materials (example section provided below)
4. Allowable encroachments in the setback area

Chapter 18.24 Context-Based Design Standards

18.24.010 Purpose and Applicability

(A) Purpose

- (i) The purpose of the Context-Based Design Standards is to provide design guidance and objective design standards development projects.

(B) Applicability of regulations

- (i) Within the following zones, the intent statements apply to all project types, new construction, and renovation; design standards apply to new construction:
 - (a) RM-20, RM-30, RM-40
 - (b) CN, CS, CD, CC
 - (c) PTOD
 - (d) MOR, ROLM, RP
 - (e) PC

Public art in residential and residential mixed-use projects is subject to Chapter 16.61 and exempt from these requirements.

(C) Alternative compliance

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

Residential and mixed-use residential projects may choose to forgo one or more objective standards and instead meet the spirit of the relevant intent statements, as determined by the Director or the Architectural Review Board, depending on the level of review required by Chapter 18.75.

Commercial-only projects or other non-residential projects should meet relevant standards; they are not required to adhere irrelevant standards related to residential uses. Depending on the level of review required by Chapter 18.75, the Director or the Architectural Review Board will determine compliance with the relevant intent statements.

(D) Definitions

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

- (i) **Primary Building Frontage:** 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.
- (ii) **Primary Building Entry:** The entrance leading to a lobby and/or accessed from the primary building frontage.
- (iii) **Pedestrian Walkway:** 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.
- (iv) **Façade Modulation:** A change in building plane, either a recess or a projection, that changes shape of the interior space.

18.24.020 Public Realm/Sidewalk Character

(A) Intent

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:

- 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, and news racks).
- Complement or match accent paving to existing designs in downtown and Cal Ave areas.
- Provide sidewalk widths that accommodate landscaping, street trees, furniture, and pedestrian amenities; create a pleasant, desirable place to walk; provides shade; and enable comfortable pedestrian passage.
- Provide amenities, such as parking and repair equipment, for micromobility, such as bicycles and scooters.

(B) Streetscape

(i) Sidewalk Widths

(a) Public sidewalks abutting a development parcel shall have a minimum sidewalk width (curb to back of walk) of **XXX feet [TBD in consultation with Public Works]**. 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.

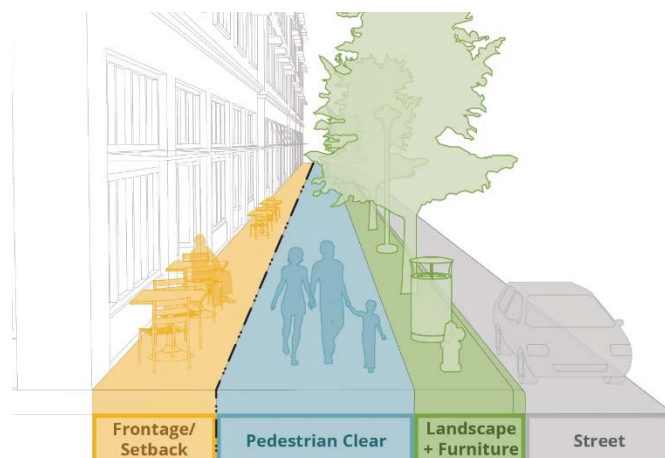
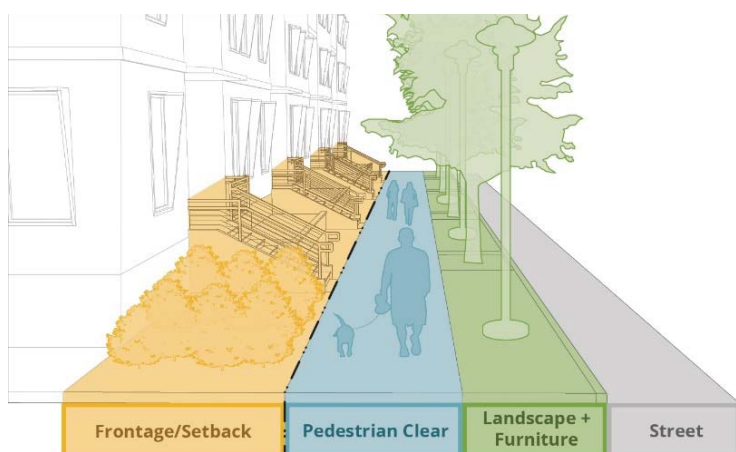
1. Notwithstanding subsection (a), the following streets/locations shall have a minimum sidewalk width of:

- a. Park Boulevard (South of Caltrain to Ventura): TBD, per NVCAP
- b. El Camino Real and San Antonio Avenue: 12 ft
- c. Other Corridors in Commercial Zones (CN, CS, CC, CC(2)) : 8ft
- d. CD Districts and SOFA: 10 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. Pedestrian walkways that are designed to provide access to bicycles shall have a minimum width of eight feet.

(ii) Street Trees

(a) Sidewalks shall include at least one street tree, within six feet of the sidewalk, for every 30 feet of linear feet of sidewalk length.



Frontage		Sidewalk		Street
Building Setback	Frontage Area	Pedestrian Clear Zone	Landscape/Furniture Zone	
Property Line Varies			Landscape/Furniture Area	Edge Zone 18" typ. Curb + Step Out Area
Mixed-Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk Dining • Outdoor Displays • Public Art • Seating • Planting 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Trees/Planting • Street Lighting • Seating • Mobility Infrastructure • Bike Parking • Public Art • Outdoor Dining 	
Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stoops • Porches • Front Yards • Utilities • Planting 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Parking • Bike Lanes • Drop-off Zones • Parklets 	

(iii) Accent Paving

- (a) Sidewalks and publicly accessible areas fronting University Avenue and California Avenue shall match existing accent paving design and materials, such as a mosaic tile and bricks.

(iv) Mobility Infrastructure

- (a) Micromobility infrastructure, such as locations to lock bicycles and scooters, shall be located within 20 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 20 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.

18.24.030 Site Access

(A) Intent

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:

- Site circulation and access that presents a clear hierarchy and connectivity pattern for all travel modes both within a project and to adjacent sidewalks and transit stops. This hierarchy may provide separate access for vehicles and other modes, or demonstrate how all modes are accommodated in shared access points.
- Connections to side streets, open spaces, mews, alleys, and paseos
- 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) Circulation Hierarchy

- (i) Sites shall clearly identify a hierarchy of connectivity in a circulation plan that identifies a priority for pedestrian, bike, private vehicles, and utility/loading access in the order listed. [see comment in text box below]
- (ii) 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.

(C) Building Entries

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

Circulation Plan: Some topics are inherently difficult to create clear and objective standards to meet the intent of the guidelines while providing flexibility that is needed for each project. One way to create an objective standard for these performance criteria is to have a requirement that a developer submit a plan to meet these criteria. The review of the plan material, description of how the project will meet the intent of the guidelines, and the implementation will not be objective and thus not applicable to deny a project for not meeting the City's expectations of the guidelines, but the act of having to write the report/plan may provide enough guidance and design thinking to get most of the way there in most cases.

(D) Vehicle Access

- (i) Vehicle access shall be located on alleys or side streets where available.
- (ii) Vehicle access, vehicle loading, and off-street parking shall follow the following standards:
 - (a) 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.
- (iii) Special Conditions
 - (b) California Avenue: Vehicular access to CC(2) zoned sites on California Avenue which requires vehicular movement across the sidewalk on California Avenue shall be prohibited, except where required by law and as applied to parcels owned, leased or controlled by the City.
 - (c) University Avenue: Vehicular access to CD-C zoned sites on University Avenue which requires vehicular movement across the sidewalk on University Avenue shall be prohibited, except where required by law and as applied to parcels owned, leased or controlled by the City.

(E) Loading Docks and Service Areas

- (iii) 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

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:

- Buildings that create a contiguous street wall that are compatible with nearby buildings and land uses.
- Placement and orientation of doorways, windows, stoops, and landscape elements to create a direct relationship with the street

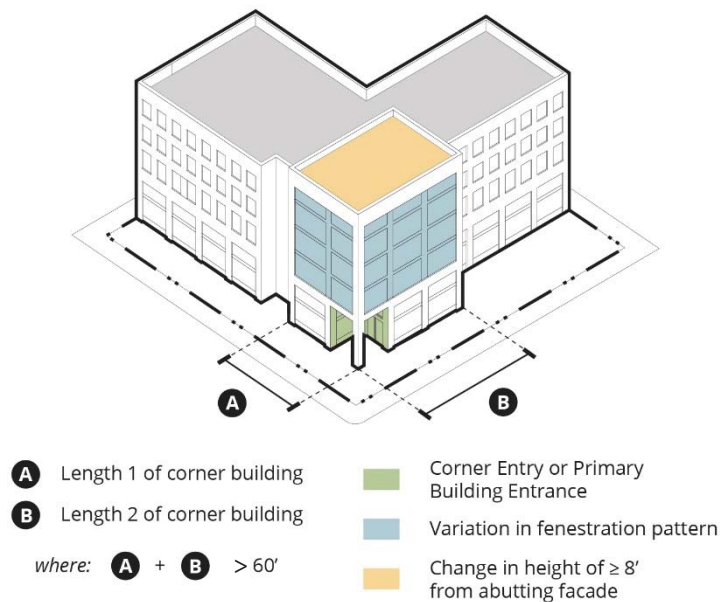
- Ground floor residential units that have direct entry and presence on the street
- Transitional spaces and buffer areas between buildings, parcels, and sites through building setbacks that distinguish private and public spaces.
- Buildings that provide side and rear setbacks and/or upper story stepbacks to create separation between adjacent lower density residential development.
- Landscaped or usable areas that contain open space or hardscaped areas.
- Optimized building orientation for heat gain, shading, daylighting, and natural ventilation and other forms of passive design.

(B) Building Orientation

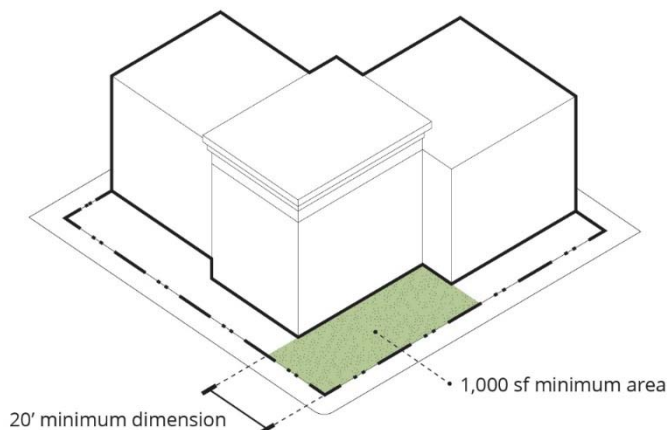
(i) Treatment of Corner Buildings

(a) Corner buildings shall include one of the following special features:

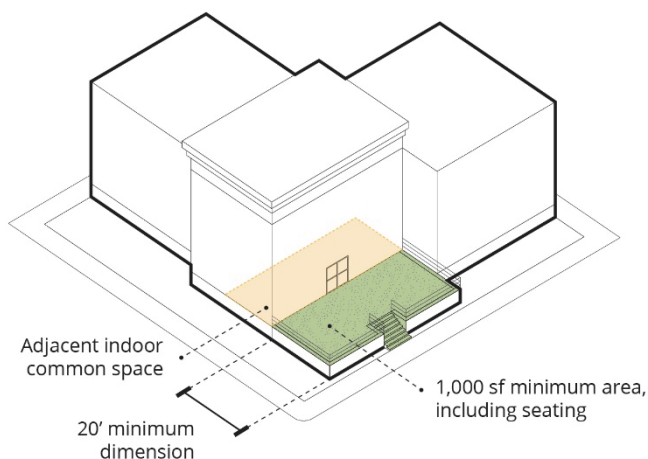
1. Street wall shall be located at the minimum front yard setback or build-to line for a minimum aggregated length of 60 feet in length on both facades meeting at the corner and shall include one or more of the following building features:
 - a. A corner entry to ground floor retail or primary building entrance
 - b. A different material application and fenestration pattern from the rest of the façade
 - c. A change in height of at least 8 feet greater or less than the height of the abutting façade.



2. A publicly accessible open space with a minimum dimension of 20 feet and minimum area of 1,000 square feet.



3. A common open space that is no more than six feet above the back of walk grade at the corner, is located adjacent to indoor common spaces, with direct access, has areas for seating, has a minimum dimension of 20 feet and minimum area of 1,000 square feet, and has a fence or railing that is no less than 50 percent open or transparent.



(ii) Primary Building Entry

(a) The primary building entry shall meet one of the following standards:

1. Face a public right-of-way Be visible from a public right-of-way through a forecourt or front porch that meets the following standards:
 - a. 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 five feet.
 - b. For commercial buildings or residential buildings with more than six units, building entry forecourts or front porches shall be a minimum of 100 square feet and a minimum width of 8 feet.

(iii) Ground Floor Residential Units

- (a) A minimum of 80% of ground floor residential units facing 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)
- (b) Entries to ground floor residential units shall face a public right-of-way or publicly accessible path/open space or be visible from a public right-of-way through a forecourt or front porch that is a minimum of 30 square feet.
- (c) Ground floor residential units shall be setback a minimum 15 feet from the back of sidewalk.

(C) Front Yard Setback Character

- (i) Required setbacks shall provide an extension of the sidewalk as 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 = Minimum of 20% of the required setback
 - (b) Other ground-floor non-residential uses. A minimum of 40% of the required setback area
 - Ground-floor residential uses. A minimum of 60% of the required setback area

18.24.050 Building Massing

(A) Intent

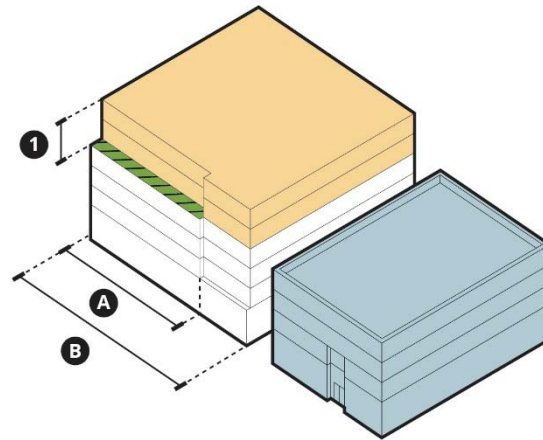
To create buildings that are compatible with and enhance the surrounding area through the consideration of building scale, massing, and bulk. Massing should create a human-scale environment that is of high aesthetic quality and accommodates a variety of uses and design features. Building massing should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

- Break down large building facades and massing to create a human-scaled building that enhances the context of the site
- Are consistent in scale, mass and character to adjacent land uses and land use designations
- Reinforce the definition and importance of the street
- Provide rooflines and massing that emphasize and accentuate significant elements of the building such as entries, bays, and balconies, and shading elements where appropriate.
- Provide harmonious transitions between adjacent properties

(B) Contextual Massing

(i) Upper Floor Step Backs

- (c) When the average height of the building is greater than 20 feet above the average height of an adjacent building, an upper floor step back shall start within 2 vertical feet, plus or minus, of the height of the adjacent building, be a minimum depth of six feet along the primary building frontage, and the step should occur for a minimum of 70% of the façade length.

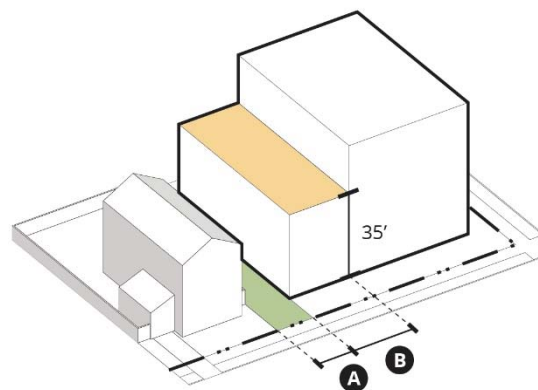


- 1 Building height $\geq 20'$ above adjacent building
- A Step back along $\geq 70\%$ length of B
- Step back area $\leq 6'$ depth along primary facade
- B Building frontage

(ii) Transition to Lower Density Building Types

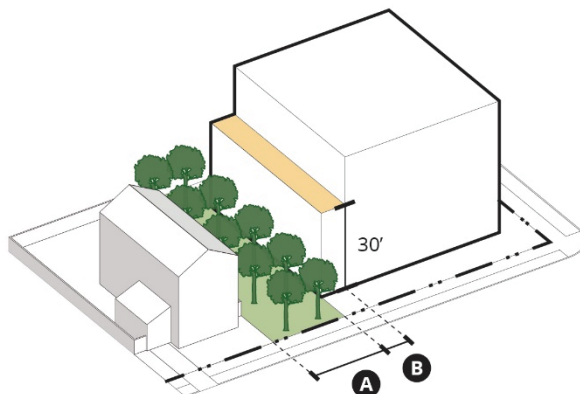
(d) When a building abuts a side and/or rear property line with a RE, RMD, R-1, or R-2 zoned parcel or a village residential or existing single-family residential use, the building shall break down the abutting façade by meeting the following standards:

1. A reduction in mass through one of the following:
 - a. A minimum 15-foot building setback and an upper floor step back above 35 feet in height for a minimum depth of 25 feet.
 - b. Jodie - to add IR privacy type Guidelines that are objective
 - (i) Frosted windows
 - (ii) Staggered window placement



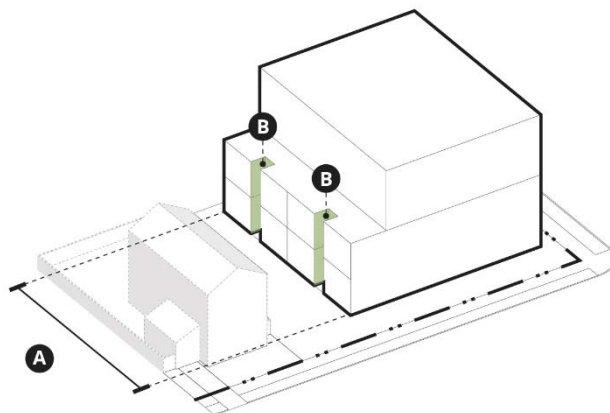
- A Minimum side or rear setback $\geq 15'$
- B Upper floor step back $\geq 25'$ deep

- c. A minimum 20-foot building side yard setback, a minimum 10-foot step back above 30 feet in height, and a landscape screen that includes a double row of trees with a minimum 1 tree per 30 linear feet plus continuous shrubbery planting 72 inches (6 feet) in height [NOTE: Alternative is to maintain existing daylight plane]



- A** Minimum side or rear setback $\geq 30'$ including double row of trees
- B** Upper floor step back $\geq 10'$ deep

2. A minimum façade break of six feet in width and six feet in depth for every 36 to 40 feet of façade length.



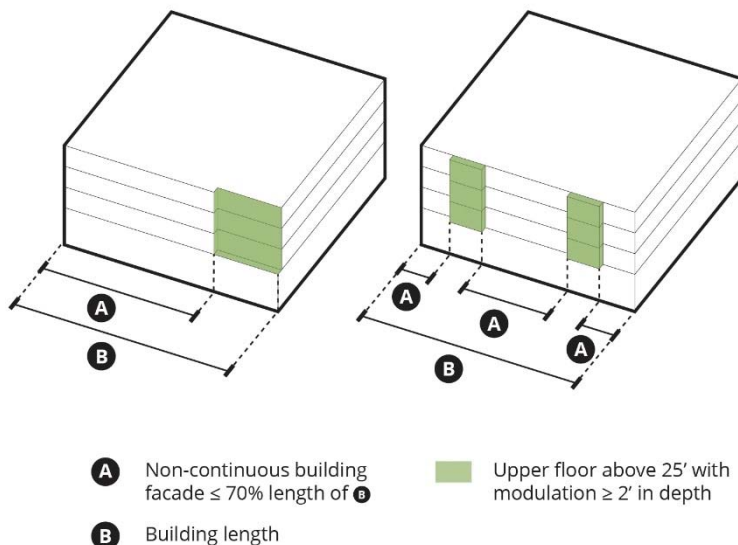
- A** Building facade $\geq 40'$
- B** 6' wide, 6' deep break

3. A maximum 15% window coverage of facades within 30 feet of abutting property line.

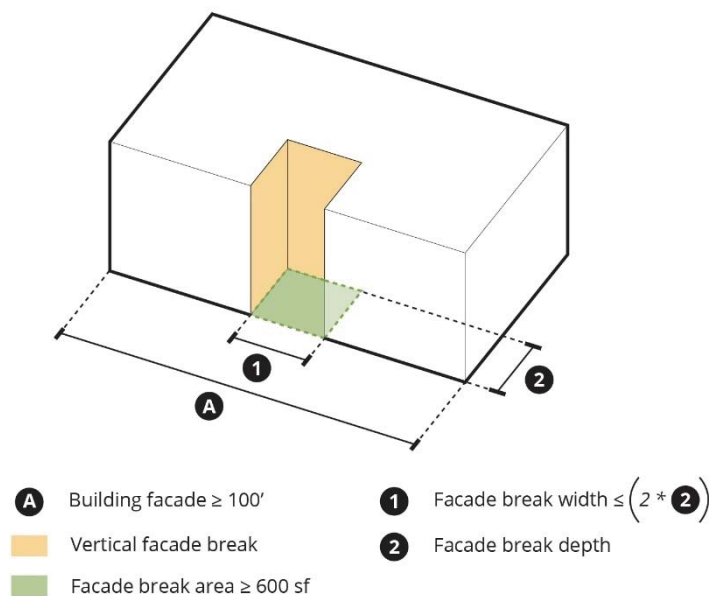
(C) Maximum Façade Length

(i) Significant Breaks

- (a) For portions of a building facade facing a public street, right-of-way, or publicly accessible path, any building greater than 25 feet in height shall not have a continuous facade greater than 70% of the façade length. Upper floor façade modulation shall be a minimum 2 feet in depth.



- (b) Buildings greater than 100 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 600 square feet and a width less than or equal to two times the depth.



(D) Special Conditions

(i) Railroad Frontages

- (a) All parcels with lot lines abutting railroad rights-of-way shall meet the following standards on the railroad-abutting facade:
1. A minimum facade break of at least 10 feet in width and six feet in depth for every 60 feet of façade length.
 2. For portion of a building greater than 20 feet or greater in height, a maximum continuous façade length shall not exceed 60 feet.
 3. A daylight setback plane starting 10 feet in height from grade at the property line and extending at a 1:1 ratio.

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:

- Human-scaled detail, articulation, and craftsmanship
- Quality of construction, craftsmanship, and design to create long lasting buildings
- Articulation of the building base or ground floor, body or middle, and top, cornice or parapet edge
- Expression of a human-scaled façade rhythm and pattern that reflects the building's use
- Fenestration that enhances the architectural character of the building
- Defined building entry that is proportional to the building and number of people served

(B) Application

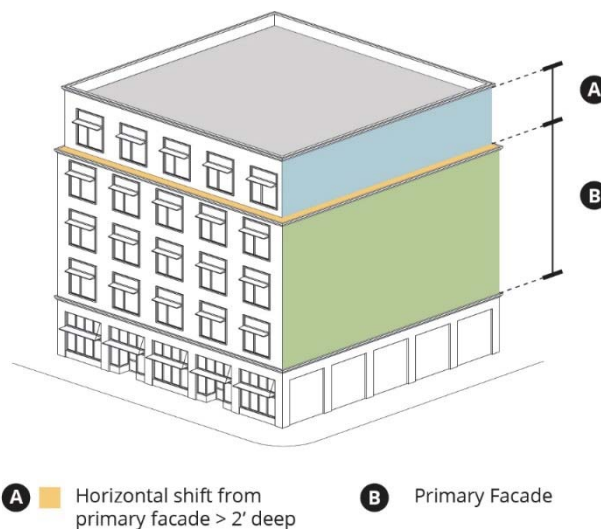
- (i) All facades shall meet all the required design standards and guidelines to ensure the same level of care and integrity throughout the building design.
- (ii) Façade sidewalls located along a zero-lot line where, at time of approval are not visible from a right-of-way, are exempt.
- (iii) Façade 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) Human Scaled Architecture

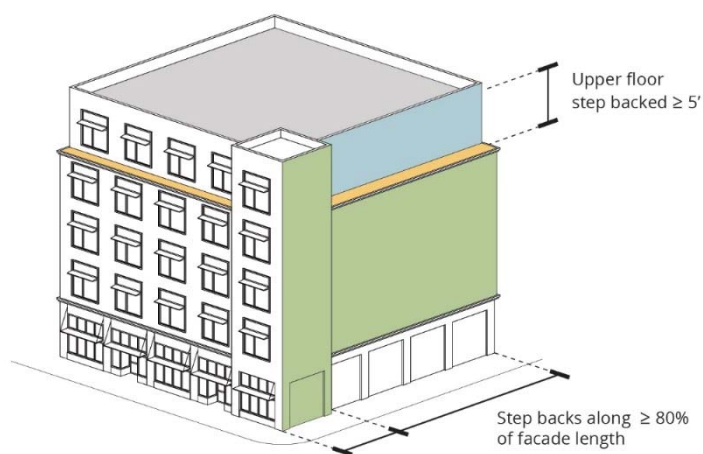
(i) Base/Middle/Top

- (a) Buildings three stories or taller shall be designed to differentiate a defined base or ground floor, a middle or body, and a top, cornice, or parapet cap. Buildings two stories or less shall include a defined base and top. Each of these elements shall be distinguished from one another through use of two or more of the following four techniques:

1. *Variation in building modulation* (select a minimum of one)
 - a. Horizontal shifts. Changes in floor plates that protrude and/or recess with a minimum dimension of two feet from the primary facade.

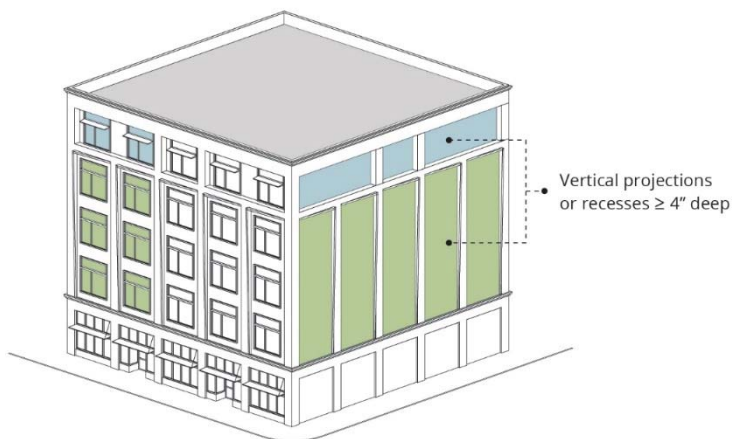


- b. Upper floor step backs. A horizontal step back of upper-floor façades with a minimum five-foot step back from the primary façade for a minimum of 80% of the length of the façade.

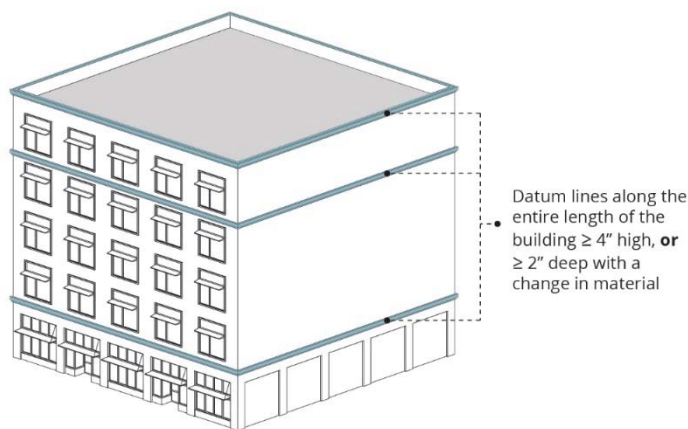


- c. Ground floor step back. A horizontal shift of the ground floor facade with a minimum depth of two feet for a minimum 80% of the length of the façade. Ground floor step backs shall not exceed the maximum setback requirements, where stated.

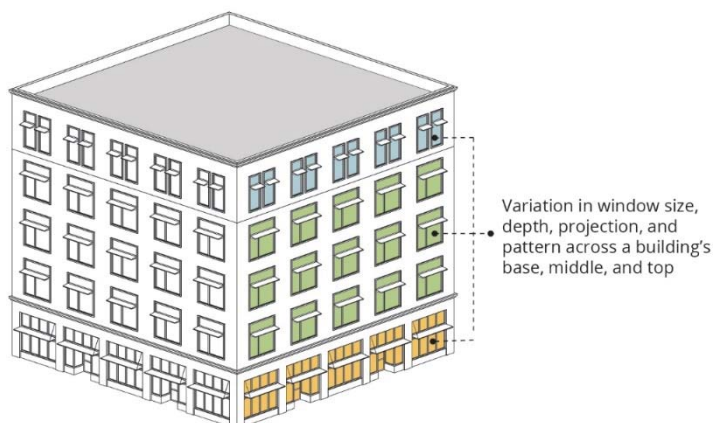
2. *Variation in facade articulation* (select a minimum of one)
- Horizontal and/or vertical recesses such as a pattern of recessed grouping of windows, recessed panels, or similar strategies as approved by the Director. The recess shall be a minimum four inches in depth.
 - Horizontal and/or vertical projections such as shading and weather protection devices, decorative architectural details, or similar strategies as approved by the Director. Projections shall be a minimum four inches in depth.



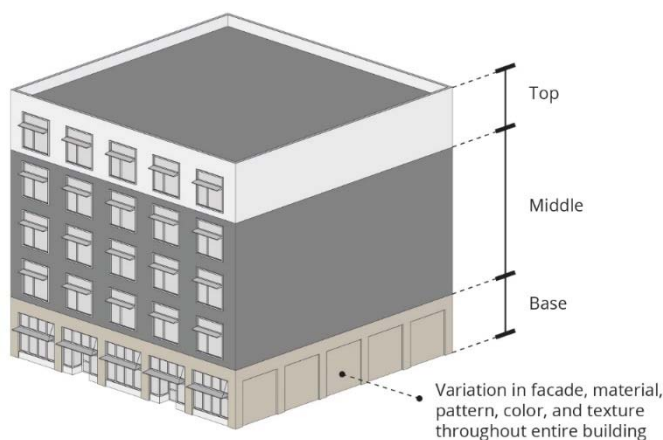
- Datum lines that continue the length of the building, such as parapets or cornices, with a minimum four inches in height or a minimum two inches in depth and include a change in material;



3. Variation in fenestration size, proportions, pattern, and depth or projection.



4. *Variation in two of the following: façade material, material size, texture and pattern, or color.*



(ii) Façade Articulation

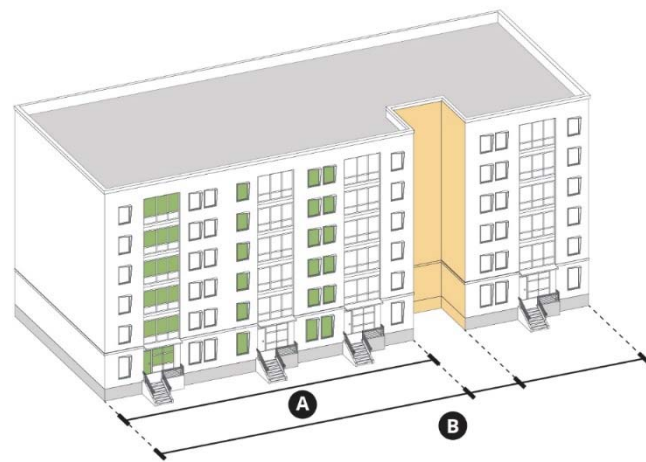
- (a) Building facades shall use a variety of strategies including building modulation, fenestration, and façade articulation to create visual interest and express a variety of scales through a variety of strategies. All facades shall include a minimum of one of the following façade articulation strategies to create visual interest:
1. Vertical and horizontal recesses such as a pattern of recessed grouping of windows, recessed panels, or similar strategies as approved by the Director. The recess shall be a minimum four inches in depth.
 2. Vertical and horizontal projections such as shading and weather protection devices, decorative architectural details, or similar strategies as approved by the Director. Projections shall be a minimum four inches in depth.

3. 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;
4. Balconies, habitable projections, or Juliet balconies (every 20 to 40 feet) with a minimum four inches in depth;
5. Screening devices such as lattices, louvers, shading devices, perforated metal screens, or similar strategies as approved by the Director; or
6. Use of fine-grained building materials, such as brick or wood shingles, not to exceed eight inches in either height or width.

(iii) Compatible Rhythm and Pattern

(a) Residential or residential mixed-use 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 oriented patterns. The following standards apply:

1. For facades less than 100 feet in length, the façade shall have vertically oriented patterns of vertical recesses or projects, façade articulation, and/or fenestration.



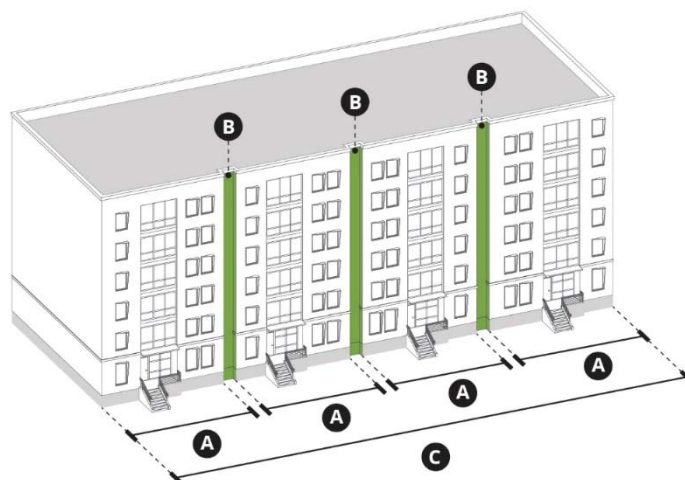
A Facade length $\leq 100'$


B Building length $> 100'$

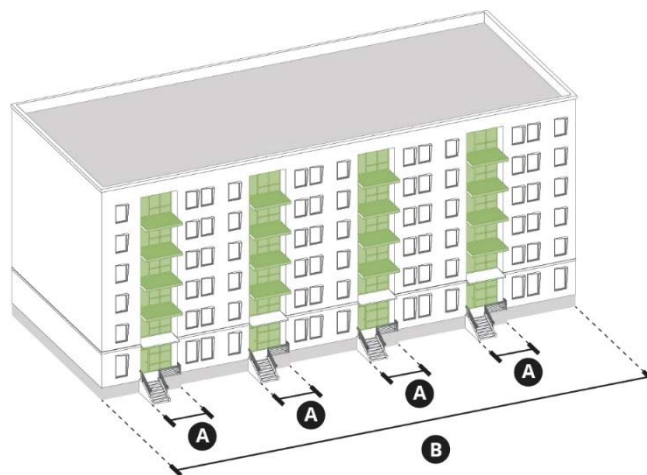
Vertically oriented patterns

Major break for buildings $\geq 100'$ long

2. For continuous facades greater than 100 feet in length, the façade shall include a vertical recess or projection with a minimum four feet wide and two feet deep vertical shift modulation to establish a rhythm between 20 to 50 feet in width for housing units or 12 to 16 feet in width for individual rooms and spaces.



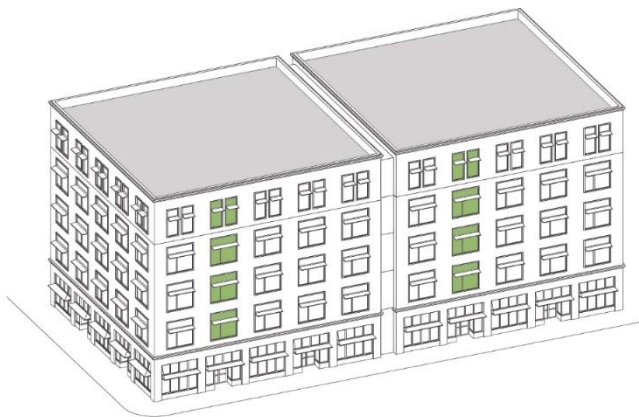
- A** 20' - 50' horizontal increment **C** Facade length $\geq 100'$
B 4' wide, 2' deep vertical recesses  Vertically oriented patterns



- A** 12' - 16' wide vertical recess/projections **B** Building length $\geq 100'$
 Vertically oriented patterns

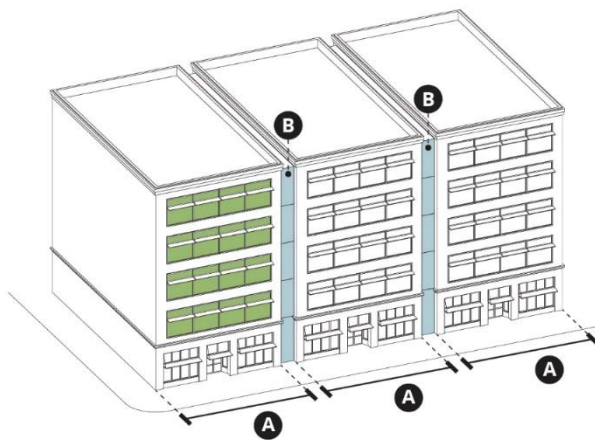
(b) Residential mixed-use and non-residential buildings shall express a vertical rhythm and pattern by using one of the following options:

1. Facades shall use vertical patterns of building modulation, façade articulation, and fenestration;



Vertical patterns along building facade

2. 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.



A Vertical modulation $\geq 50'$ of building length

B 4' wide, 2' deep vertical recesses

Horizontally oriented patterns along building facade

(c) Storefront uses shall express a vertical rhythm not to exceed 30 to 50 feet in width.

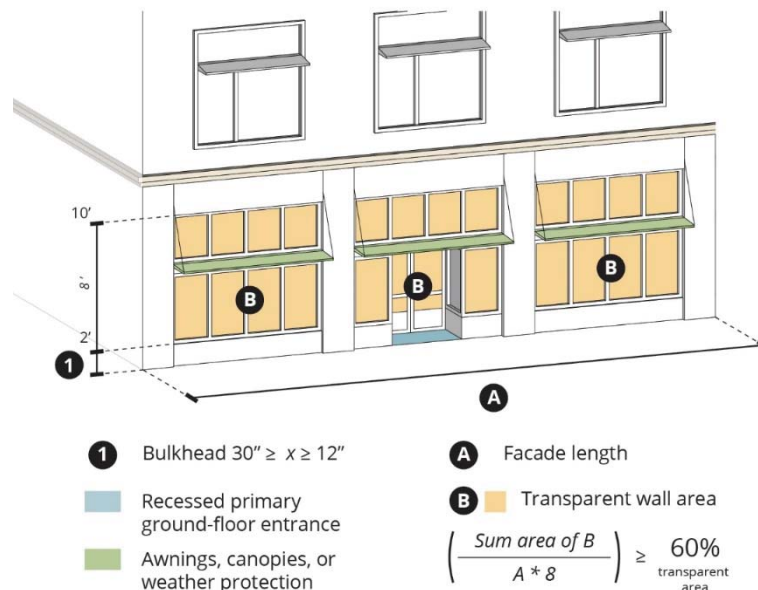
(iv) Emphasize Building Elements and Massing

(a) Building Entries Within Façade Design

1. 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: 10 feet in width
 - c. Commercial building entry: 20 feet in width
 - d. Storefront entry: six feet in width
2. 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.

(D) Ground Floor Character**(i) Storefront/Retail Ground Floors**

- (a) Ground floor height shall be a minimum 14 feet floor-to-floor or shall maintain a 2nd 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:
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. Awnings may be fixed or retractable.
 - 3. Awnings, canopies and other weather protection elements shall not extend across the entire facade. Instead, individual segments shall be installed over each storefront entry or set of storefront windows and shall not extend across wall sections, across multiple windows or over columns.

**(ii) Other Non-residential Ground Floors**

- (a) Ground floor height shall be a minimum 14 feet floor-to-floor or shall match the 2nd 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.

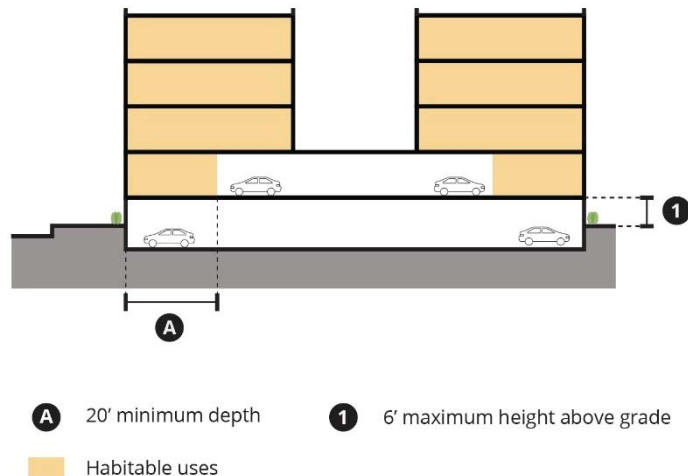
- (c) Primary entries shall include weather protection that is a minimum 10 feet wide and 8 feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning or using a combination of these methods.

(iii) Residential Ground Floors

- (a) Finished Floor Height: Units on ground floors shall have a finished floor height at a minimum two feet above average back of sidewalk height for the associated façade.
- (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.

(E) Parking/Loading/Utilities

- (i) 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)
- (ii) Above grade structured parking levels facing a public right-of-way or publicly accessible open space/path shall be lined with commercial or habitable uses with a minimum depth of 20 feet.
- (iii) Partially sub-grade parking not exceeding six feet in height above abutting grade at back of sidewalk shall be screened with features meeting the standards of section *18.24.110 Visual, Screening, and Landscaping*.



18.24.070 Residential Entries

(A) Intent

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

- human-scaled detailing
- enhanced pedestrian experience
- transition between public and private space
- spaces for residents to gather and spend time outdoors
- resident privacy

(B) Ground floor unit entries

(i) Where ground floor residential unit entries are required, one or more of the following entry types shall be provided:

(a) Stoop:

1. Stoops shall provide entry access for a maximum of two units.; and
2. Stoop entry landings shall be a minimum 4 feet in depth; and
3. The maximum stoop height from the back of sidewalk grade shall be 5 feet.



(b) Porch:

1. Porches shall provide entry access for a maximum of one unit; and
2. Porches shall be large enough so a 6-foot by 6-foot square can fit inside of a porch for each unit; and
3. The maximum porch floor height from the back of sidewalk grade shall be 5 feet.



(c) Terrace:

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



(d) Frontage Court:

1. A Frontage Court may serve multiple unit entries; and
2. The minimum Frontage Court width along a primary frontage shall be 25 feet; and
3. The maximum Frontage Court width along a primary frontage shall be 50 percent of the facade length or 80 feet, whichever is less; and
4. The minimum Frontage Court depth shall be 25 feet; and
5. 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:

- Be integrated into the site access and building circulation strategy
- Be generous in dimension to provide usable space
- Provide landscape elements that will support the health of the plants and enhance the character of place
- Promote public health
- Be located to provide easy access to private and common building areas
- Promote sustainable practices and opportunities for green infrastructure
- Promote community safety through eyes on the street

(B) Private Open Space

Private Open Spaces shall be immediately accessible from each residential unit, provide direct visible access to the sky, protect from weather, and take advantage of possible views. Private Open Spaces shall meet the following standards:

- (a) Minimum dimension of six feet by six feet.
- (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:
 1. RM-20 and RM-30 districts, Minimum dimension of eight feet by eight feet and 100 square feet of area for at least 75% of the area
 2. RM-40 districts, Minimum dimension of six feet by six feet and 80 square feet of area for at least 75% of the area
 3. [TO COME: Regulating height above the ground-floor/setback from the street to ensure privacy/usability]

(C) Common Open Space

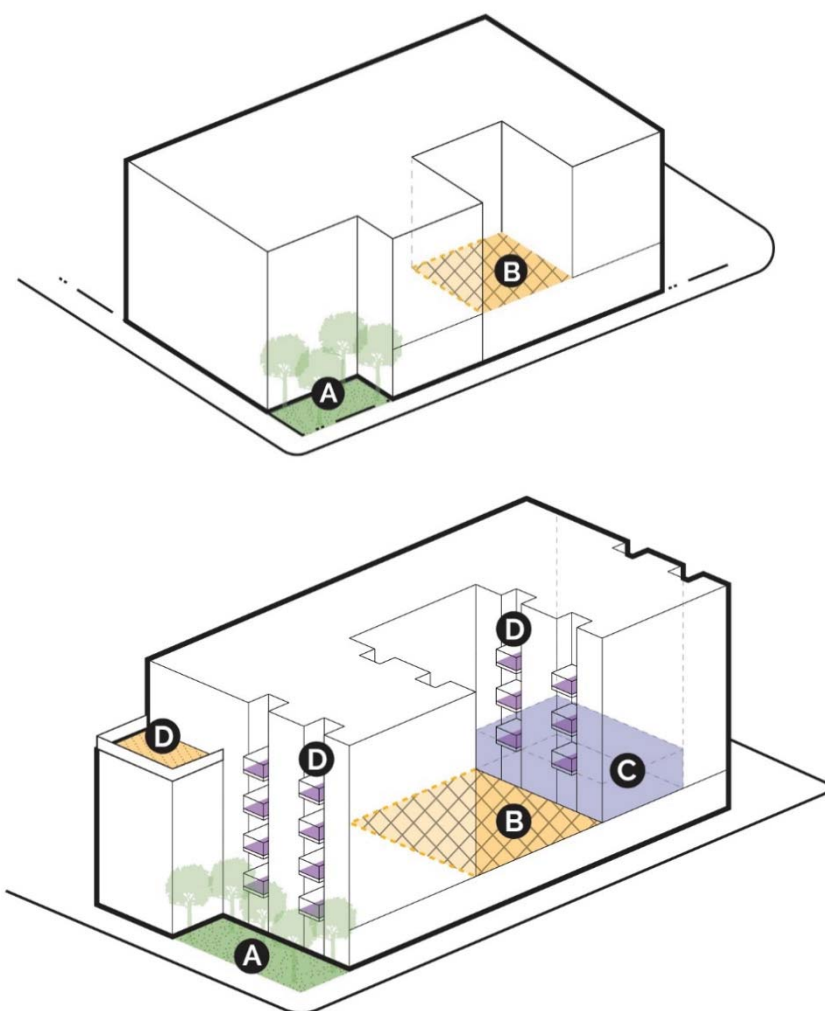
Common Open Space shall meet the following standards:

1. Minimum dimension of 12 feet.
2. Minimum of 60% of area open to the sky free of permanent weather protection or encroachments
3. 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
4. Include places to sit
5. A minimum 20% of landscaping

6. 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.
7. Rooftop Open Space:
 - a. In order to qualify as usable open space, a rooftop garden shall meet the requirements set forth in Section 18.40.230.
 - b. Rooftop open spaces may fulfill usable open space requirements in the following districts:
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) 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.

Suggested Diagrams

Usable Open Space:



18.24.090 Materials

Example section of how materials could be regulated, by district (e.g., primary, secondary, accent, prohibited).

70.04.2.8 Materials

Intent

To promote the use of high quality, durable, 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.

Applicable Design Principles

1. Design Places for People
3. Promote High-quality Design
4. Consider Development Context
7. Incorporate Sustainability and Resiliency

Design Guideline	Design Standard
<p>G1. Refer to Table 70.04.2.7 Materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The predominant building material(s) shall be high quality, durable, and attractive. b. The predominant building material(s) may be complimented with other secondary materials that may not be appropriate on large areas of the facade. c. Accent materials that would generally not be acceptable on large areas of the facade may be used in limited areas of the facade to highlight architectural features. <p>G2. Standard S2 shall be met.</p>	<p>S1. Refer to Table 70.04.2.8 Materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Buildings shall utilize primary materials for no less than 65 percent of each building facade. Secondary materials are prohibited as primary cladding on building facades and shall not be allowed on more than 35 percent of each building facade. c. Accent materials are permitted on no greater than 5 percent of each facade as trims or accents (e.g. flashing, projecting features, ornamentation, etc.). c. Buildings 30 feet and shorter, measured from average grade plane to eave or top of parapet, whichever is higher, with elevations 50 feet or narrower may utilize any secondary material as a primary material. <p>S2. Materials identified as prohibited in Table 70.04.2.8 shall not be used.</p>

Table 70.04.2.8 Materials

P = Primary material
S = Secondary Material
A = Accent Material
N = Prohibited Material or Fencing Type

Material	Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, or Mixed-Use	Multifamily and Single Family Attached
Brick (full dimensional)	P	P
Stone/masonry	P	P
Stucco	S ¹	P
Glass (transparent, spandrel)	P	P
Finished wood, wood veneers, and wood siding	P	P
Factory or naturally finished flat, profiled, fluted, or ribbed metal panels	P	P
Fiber reinforced cement siding and panels	S ¹	P
Concrete blocks with integral color (ground, polished, or glazed finishes)	S ¹	S ¹
Concrete (poured in place or precast)	P	P
Concrete blocks with integral color (split face finish)	S ¹	S ¹
Ceramic tile	S ¹	S ¹
Standing seam metal	S ¹	S ¹
Other material as approved by the Planning Commission	P/S	P/S
Glass block	A	A
Corrugated metal	A	A
Vegetated wall panels or trellises	A	A
Vinyl siding	N	N
T-111 Plywood	N	N
Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EIFS)	N	N
Plastic or vinyl fencing	N	N
Chain link fencing	N	N

¹ Smaller scale buildings may use this as a primary material. See 70.04.2.8.51.d

18.24.100 Visual Screening, and Landscaping

Relocate existing lighting standards from 18.23.050.

18.24.110 Lighting

Relocate existing lighting standards from 18.23.030.