

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

24.12.185

Objective Development Standards

DRAFT FOR ADOPTION

Table of Contents

[Document Guide](#)

[Differentiation by District](#)

[Definitions \(Section 24.12.185.2\)](#)

[Site Design \(Sections 24.12.185.3 – 24.12.185.9\)](#)

[Building Design \(Sections 24.12.185.10 – 24.12.185.17\)](#)

Document Guide

Purpose of the Document

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of clear, objective, and measurable standards for multi-family and mixed-use residential development that is consistent with the character of Santa Cruz while also ensuring that new housing development is economically feasible (Section 24.12.185.a).

To address the housing shortage, recent State legislation, including Senate Bill (SB) 35, SB 330, and SB 9, requires multi-family projects to be reviewed only against objective design and development standards. According to the Government Code (Sections 65913.4 and 66300[a][7]), objective development standards *“involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable”* by development applicants and public officials before submittal of a project application. In other words, objective standards allow applicants to know the requirements that will apply to a proposed project so that they can design a project that meets those standards. These objective development standards can therefore make development more predictable and easier to interpret for all stakeholders, including decision makers, City staff, applicants, and members of the public.

The standards in this document will dictate the form and style of new development on some prominent parcels throughout the city at key intersections and in many residential neighborhoods. Creating standards that are easy to understand and effective at creating high-quality buildings will make creating new affordable and market rate housing easier and more transparent for existing and future residents of Santa Cruz.

Relationship to Other Planning Documents

While the City has many design guidelines that promote best practices, many are subjective or optional, and therefore cannot currently be enforced under State law. The objective development standards in this document work as a baseline, creating citywide standards that apply to all new multi-family and mixed-use residential projects. The standards in this document work in tandem with other City standards already in place.

- **General Plan.** The General Plan contains objective standards related to floor-area-ratio (FAR) and/or development density for all land uses in the City. The objective development standards in this document are consistent with the General Plan and dictate the bulk, mass, and design of buildings in a more fine-grained way than the General Plan.
- **Area Plans.** The Area Plans will continue to set a vision and best practices for specific geographic areas/neighborhoods in Santa Cruz. Where applicable, the objective development standards have drawn on standards and guidelines that exist in the Area Plans. Objective standards that exist in Area Plans will continue to apply. Objective standards can be identified in Area Plans by reviewing guidelines and standards for words like “must,” “shall,” “will” or “will not.”
- **Zoning.** The Zoning District Standards contain objective standards that define the building envelope such as setbacks, heights, parking, and open space requirements. These district-by-district standards will continue to dictate basic development standards, and the objective development standards will apply in addition to these requirements, providing refinement in terms of site and building design. Note that in order to maximize opportunities for housing, zoning standards relating to required open space are proposed to be amended with the objective standards.
- **Other Municipal Code Sections.** The City also maintains and enforces standards related to stormwater drainage, roadway and traffic requirements, and standards for working within the public right of way to install sidewalks, street trees, and lighting. These standards will continue to apply, and City departments are evaluating the need to make some of the existing standards more objective in order to ensure they continue to apply in the necessary manner.
- **Building Standards Codes.** All construction in the State of California is subject to the California Building Standards Codes which dictate health, safety, and energy and water efficiency standards for new and remodeled structures. In Santa Cruz, the City’s Green Building Program also requires additional green building features of every new housing unit and requiring responsible disposal of construction waste products.

Implementation

The objective standards in this document relate to building design and site design for new development and redevelopment projects (including all multi-family proposals that meet the definition of demolition in the municipal code). The standards here will be incorporated into the

zoning code as part of chapter 24.12, meaning they will be required of all new development and could be waived through a State Density Bonus application for projects providing income-restricted affordable housing units or, like any zoning standard, could be subject to an application for a variance in situations where exceptional circumstances prevent a particular site from being able to meet one or more of the standards or varied through an application for a Planned Development where public benefit is proposed. Like other zoning standards review for compliance will happen during the development review process, and ongoing maintenance of required conditions will be a matter of code enforcement.

Community Input

In the preparation of this document, the City performed significant outreach to understand the desires of the Santa Cruz community. These standards were shaped in response to the preferences gathered through this outreach process. Excerpts from the outreach efforts are included as call-out boxes throughout the document -- these are not intended to be regulatory and are simply provided to give background and context.

Word on the Street

Look for this box for snippets of what we've heard from our community engagement exercises, including public meetings, focus groups, interviews, and online surveys.

Assumptions

The regulations in this document shall apply to newly constructed residential and mixed-use buildings proposed in the city of Santa Cruz in any district other than the Central Business District (CBD). In some cases, standards apply to some zoning districts and not others; where no specific district is indicated, standards apply to all zoning districts other than the CBD and CBD-E, which are governed by the Downtown Plan. Due to potential changes in allowable development densities as a result of State-level legislation, these standards are written to apply to multi-family development -- from duplexes to mid-rise buildings, and everything in between -- in any zoning district including the R-1 zone, even though the R-1 zone is currently limited to development of single-family homes and duplexes. These standards are intended to ensure high-quality design of any new or redeveloped multi-family housing, regardless of zoning district, General Plan designation, or property ownership.

Throughout the document there are some standards which may apply specific considerations to different zoning districts because of their specific types of uses or densities. Generally, differences are split between those districts that are primarily commercial, mixed-use, or residential in nature. Where standards differentiate between districts, the specific districts they apply to are listed. If no specific district is listed, then the standard applies to all districts.

All standards in this document are written to be objective and quantifiable. Where a measurement in feet is given, it is assumed to be a linear dimension in the horizontal or vertical direction, unless otherwise stated. Where a measurement in square feet is given, it is assumed

to be gross square feet, unless otherwise stated. Where a specific term is not defined, the definitions contained in Chapter 24.22 of the Santa Cruz Municipal Code shall apply.

Differentiation by District

Surveys and focus group discussions with the Santa Cruz community revealed that, while neighborhoods do have unique characteristics in terms of street width, building spacing, streetscape improvements, and existing uses, there is no single architectural or building style that best represents any given district or neighborhood. In fact, there was a strong feeling that an eclectic mix of architectural styles is what best represents the city's architectural identity. Similarly, survey respondents preferred giving architects creative freedom over certain design features instead of dictating strict standards.

However, the results also indicated that community members desire a difference between how buildings are designed in residential neighborhoods versus along the city's major corridors (like Soquel Avenue, Ocean Street, Mission Street, and Water Street). The findings are summarized below:

- It was commonly expressed that buildings along major corridors can be taller and larger and should be designed to contribute to the walkability and livability of the community, with active ground floor uses and more space for pedestrians.
- By contrast, the lower-intensity, more residential neighborhoods were described as having a diversity of single-family homes alongside smaller apartment buildings, with abundant opportunities for landscaping.
- For all areas, the community expressed a desire for high-quality building materials, architectural features and/or detailing, and for sustainability measures that reflect the environmental values of Santa Cruz.
- In addition to environmental sustainability, the community voiced a strong desire to prioritize housing affordability and creation of a more livable, newer housing stock.

Word on the Street

Survey Results

- On commercial corridors, **67 percent of respondents preferred an eclectic building look** over a uniform one.
- In both commercial and residential areas, respondents generally preferred giving architects freedom or a menu of options.

Focus Group Feedback

- **"Santa Cruz is about uniqueness and being different**, like there's nothing that's exactly the same in Santa Cruz and that comes from the culture of not only the buildings but mostly the community and the people and the types of people that live in Santa Cruz. It's about being different and embracing your own uniqueness and everyone is ok with that. Everyone is ok with being different, which I think is really magical and something that's really important to the culture of Santa Cruz."
- "[An eclectic mix] is the only [option] I wrote yes to...It is the change in heights, it is not a box, it has visual interest, **and a mix of styles.**"

- As noted above, elements that contribute to the unique feeling of each neighborhood include the width of the streets, the sizes of the lots, the heights of the buildings, the distance that buildings are set back from the street and one another, and the mix of residential densities and non-residential uses. These are patterns that have been set – and continue to be governed – by requirements of the different zoning districts and street plan lines.

In response to these findings, the Objective Standards do not require any specific architectural style for specific neighborhoods and enable a wide variety of building styles throughout the City. Instead, these new standards require specific design approaches related to the scale and type of development in each zoning district. In a few cases, they create flexibility for building forms to achieve specific, performance-based outcomes. For all residential development, the Objective Standards emphasize human scale design, depth and articulation of building faces, high quality building materials, and sustainable design.

Definitions (Section 24.12.185.2)

Active Uses

Uses that qualify as Uses for Active Frontage are defined in each zone district where site design requires active frontage.

Buffer Landscaping

Landscaping that can be expected to be at least 50 percent opaque from ground level up to a given height within three years of planting. Such planting includes vines, bushes, shrubs, green walls, or evergreen trees with a first branch height of 2 feet or less.

Corridors

Roadways that support a high level of connectivity and intra-city mobility. For the purposes of this document, these roadways are limited to Ocean Street, Mission Street, Water Street, and Soquel Avenue.

Live-Work

Live-work is a type of Residential use that also incorporates commercial uses. The commercial uses allowed in a Live-Work unit are dictated by the uses allowed in the underlying zoning district.

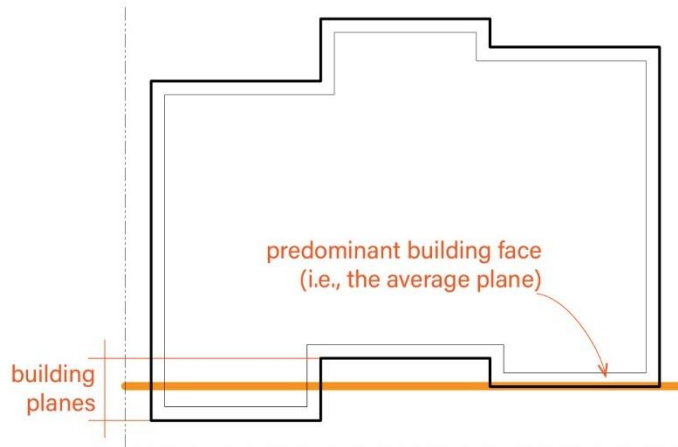
Living Wall

A Living Wall is an exterior building face covered with plants growing in containers or on special material integrated into and attached to the building exterior. The plants root in a structural support which is fastened to the wall itself, rather than in the ground. The plants receive water and nutrients from within the vertical support or container.

Predominant Building Face

Measured in plan view, the predominant building face is the average plane of the face of the building at any given level. This average includes any legal, enclosed building projections (such as bay windows or dormers), and unenclosed insets (such as inset doorways, balconies, or building notches). See **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Predominant Building Face



Public Frontage

A frontage that faces a street, public right of way, publicly accessible pedestrian path, or public open space, such as a river levee.

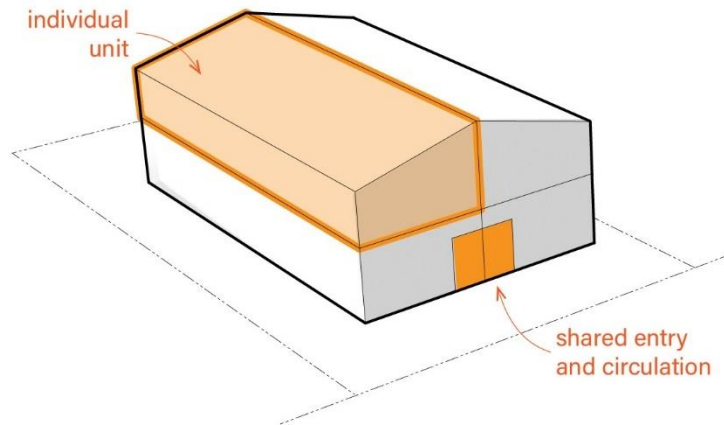
Shielded Luminaire

A luminaire is considered to be fully shielded if it is constructed and installed in such a manner that all light emitted by the luminaire, either directly from the lamp or a diffusing element, or indirectly by reflection or refraction from any part of the luminaire, is projected below the horizontal plane through the luminaire's lowest light-emitting part. (Credit: "Model Lighting Ordinance," Illuminating Engineering Society and International Dark Sky Association, June 2011.)

Stacked Flats

A multi-family building type that consists of units stacked vertically with shared circulation and no parking within the building envelope. See **Figure 2**.

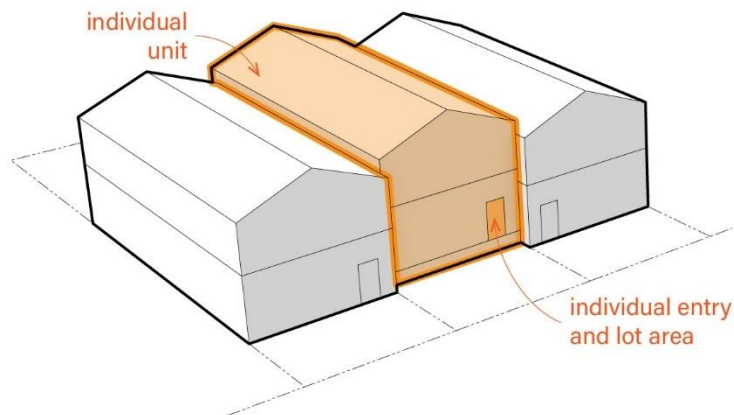
Figure 2: Stacked Flats



Townhomes

For the purposes of interpreting this section only, a townhome is a multi-family building type that consists of side-by-side units, each standing on a discrete area of land, which may or may not be a separate legal lot, with parking on the ground floor within the building envelope. This definition shall not apply beyond this section of the Municipal Code, and does not supersede the Definition of Dwelling, Townhouse in Section 24.22.318 See **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Townhomes



Site Design (Sections 24.12.185.3 – 24.12.185.9)

Consistent with the City of Santa Cruz General Plan Goals and Policies and feedback from community members, the following site design requirements guide a development pattern that promotes walkability, minimizes the visual and physical impact of vehicles, and supports opportunities for greenery and landscape.

Word on the Street

Interview Excerpt

“People will say to me, ‘You don’t have a car? How do you get around?’ Um, I walk! I prefer to walk. I always wanted to retire where I could walk to things, [it] was never [the plan] that I would have a car. **I want to be able to walk to shopping or take transit. It’s very important for my living space.**”

24.12.185.3 Maximum Building Length

Goals: *To incentivize multi-family buildings that are more affordable by design, and more ‘house-sized’ in residential zone districts.*

- a. In all R-districts and in the R-T(A), R-T(B), R-T(D) and R-T(E) districts: The maximum building length shall be as dictated by required setbacks and parcel dimensions. Where the building façade along the [public frontage](#) is no greater than 75 feet in length and where the proposal meets the definition of a [stacked flat](#) building type (as opposed to a [townhome](#) building type), the parking requirement shall be reduced by half.
 - i. On lots with multiple public frontages, such as corner lots or double-frontage lots, this requirement applies only to the public frontage requiring the widest sidewalk. Where required sidewalks are of equal width, this requirement shall apply to all frontages. Required sidewalk widths are determined by considering any relevant Area Plan requirements and the requirements of Chapters 24.12 and Chapter 15.20. In all cases, where any inconsistency is present, the required sidewalk width shall be the widest standard applicable.
- b. In C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA and all MU districts: The maximum building length shall be as dictated by required setbacks and parcel dimensions.

24.12.185.4 Walkability

Goal: *To promote pedestrian permeability and walkability through districts as redevelopment occurs over time, particularly for larger sites.*

- a. Existing public connections:
 - i. In all areas of the city, where a project site includes an existing public street, alley, path, paseo, trail, or other public pedestrian connection, this public connection will be maintained or relocated within the project site.
 - ii. Existing frontage improvements including any bike lanes or sidewalks will be maintained, repaired, or upgraded as dictated by any applicable Area Plan, or, in the case where no Area Plan applies, the requirements of Section II.E Ground Floor Design, or the requirements for sidewalk widths as defined in Chapter 15.20 of the

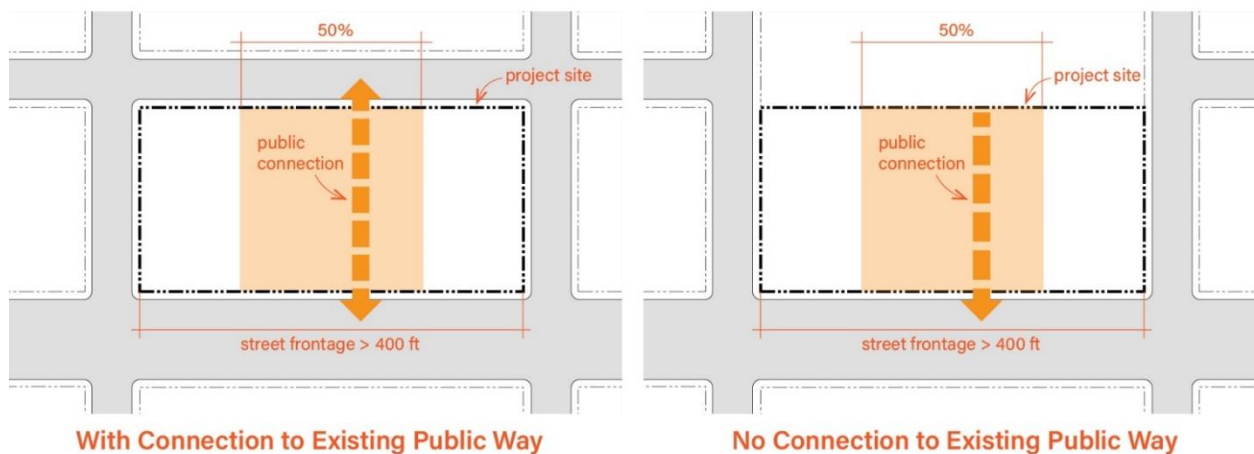
Municipal Code. Where any inconsistency between regulatory documents is present, the widest applicable sidewalk requirement shall apply.

1. Decorative sidewalks may be required based on Area Plan standards. Installation of all sidewalks will be based on the standard details provided by the Department of Public Works.
- iii. The total number of connections through the site for cyclists and pedestrians shall not be reduced.

24.12.185.5 New Public Connections

- a. Where a new public street, alley, path, paseo, trail, or other public pedestrian connection is required by an Area Plan, this connection shall be incorporated into any development or redevelopment proposal for the sites identified by the Area Plan.
- b. Where the street frontage length of a site exceeds 400 feet along a single roadway, and there is not already a public connection required by an Area Plan, the project proposal shall include a minimum of one publicly accessible street, alley, path, paseo, trail, or other public pedestrian connection within the middle 50 percent of the site. See **Figure 4**.
 - i. Where the new street, alley, path, paseo, or trail cannot connect to an existing public way, the owner of the property may reserve the right to restrict access to the public way until such time as further development allows such a connection to be made. When a connection to another public way is made, clear public access shall be provided, signage indicating that it is a public passage shall be posted, any gates or physical access restrictions shall be removed, and access shall be guaranteed through the granting of a public easement.

Figure 4: New Public Connections



- c. Regardless of the street frontage length of a project, properties abutting a public street, alley, path, paseo, trail, or other public connection on a side or rear property line shall incorporate a connection between the parcel street frontage and that existing public connection with any new development or redevelopment proposal. These connections

shall allow clear passage during daylight or business hours as applicable, whichever is longer. This standard shall not apply to corner lots.

- d. All new pedestrian or bicycle connections not including required street-side improvements such as sidewalks and on-street bike lanes shall be at least 10 feet wide and a minimum of 80 percent open to the sky. Standards for public or private streets shall be met as required by Department of Public Works design guidelines.
- e. Development or redevelopment proposals on properties with street frontage shall be required to install new or improve existing sidewalks in accordance with the requirements of any Area Plan, the requirements of Section II.E Ground Floor Design, and the requirements for sidewalk widths as defined in chapter 15.20, as applicable. Where any inconsistency between standards exists, the wider sidewalk standard shall apply.

24.12.185.6 Public Frontages

Goal: *To ensure that new development is pedestrian-oriented and provides ground floor uses that activate the public realm.*

- a. Where a common Residential lobby is provided, the lobby shall be accessed from a [public frontage](#).
- b. In all MU zones, the ground floor along any [public frontage](#) shall consist of 100 percent Uses for Active Frontage as allowed in the underlying zone district, with the exception of lobby space subject to the limitations of 24.12.185.6.e.
 - i. On lots with multiple public frontages, such as corner lots or double-frontage lots, this requirement applies only to the public frontage requiring the widest sidewalk. Where required sidewalks are of equal width, this requirement shall apply to all frontages. Required sidewalk widths are determined by considering any relevant Area Plan requirements and the requirements of Chapters 24.12 and Chapter 15.20. In all cases, where any inconsistency is present, the required sidewalk width shall be the widest standard applicable.
- c. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, and PA zones, the ground floor along the [public frontage](#) shall consist of no less than 50 percent Uses for Active Frontage as allowed in the underlying zone district.
 - i. On lots with multiple public frontages, such as corner lots or double-frontage lots, this requirement applies only to the public frontage requiring the widest sidewalk. Where required sidewalks are of equal width, this requirement shall apply to all frontages. Required sidewalk widths are determined by considering any relevant Area Plan requirements and the requirements of Chapters 24.12 and Chapter 15.20. In all cases, where any inconsistency is present, the required sidewalk width shall be the widest standard applicable.
- d. Uses for Active Frontage shall be subject to the following standards:
 - i. Uses for Active Frontage shall be built to a minimum depth of at least 25 feet as measured perpendicular to the [predominant building face](#), with the exception of areas for building ingress/egress and access to parking or loading areas. If more than one ground floor Active Frontage space is provided, the 25-foot minimum

- depth shall be applied as an average depth of the total depth of all the Active Frontage spaces along the predominant building face.
- ii. Mechanical rooms shall not be placed along the public frontage. Mechanical rooms shall be located adjacent to a driveway or parking area.
 - iii. On lots with multiple public frontages, such as corner lots or double-frontage lots, mechanical rooms may be located on a public frontage. For these lots, mechanical rooms are prohibited along the public frontage requiring the widest sidewalk of all frontages on the property. Where required sidewalks are of equal width, mechanical rooms are prohibited along all frontages. Sidewalk widths are determined by considering any relevant Area Plan requirements and the requirements of Chapters 24.12 and Chapter 15.20. In all cases, where any inconsistency is present, the required sidewalk width shall be the widest standard applicable.
 - iv. Amenities provided to building residents do not qualify as Uses for Active Frontage unless they are also open and available to the general public.
- e. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA, and all MU zones, the ground floor facing a [public frontage](#) shall be subject to the following standards:
- i. On corner lots, the ground floor shall have 100 percent commercial uses at the corner, extending for at least 30 feet on either side of the corner, or the distance of the frontage of the corner parcel, whichever is less.
 - ii. Entries to ground floor uses shall be placed at an average of every 50 linear feet or less of building frontage. The following uses are exempt from this requirement:
 - 1. Food and Beverage Stores, Medical/Health Offices
 - 2. Lodging in areas designated MXVC in the 2030 General Plan
 - iii. Residential or Commercial lobbies are limited to a maximum of 30 feet of frontage, unless they are combined with an [Active Use](#), in which case they are limited to 50 feet of frontage.
- f. In all R-districts and in the R-T(A), R-T(B), R-T(D) AND R-T(E) districts, with the exception of flag-lots, a parcel's [public frontage](#) shall be comprised of ground-floor residential uses that are oriented toward the public frontage.
- g. Ground floor residential units that face a [public frontage](#) shall provide an entry facing toward the public frontage that provides access into an entry area, living area, kitchen, or hallway (not a bathroom or bedroom, with the exception of studios).
- h. Entries facing a [public frontage](#) shall include a minimum of 48 square feet of flat, unenclosed, covered area, which may be a projection, or inset, or a combination of the two. (See Planning Code Section 24.12.120 for allowed projections into setback areas.)

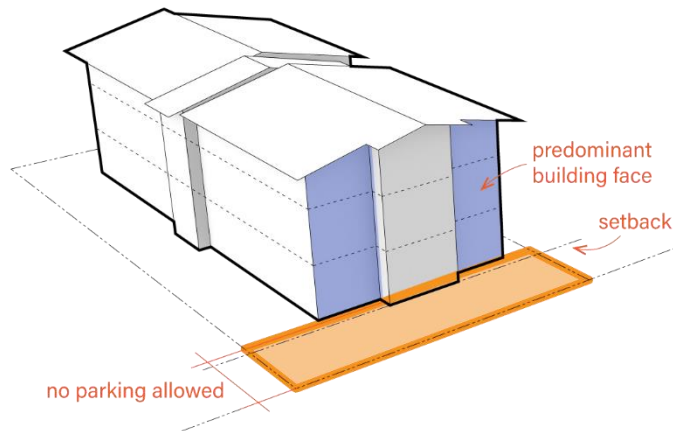
24.12.185.7 Parking Location and Screening

Goal: *To minimize the visual impact of parked cars from sidewalks and streets.*

- a. Off street parking and loading facilities, including bike parking requirements, shall be provided as required in Section 24.12.200 et seq.

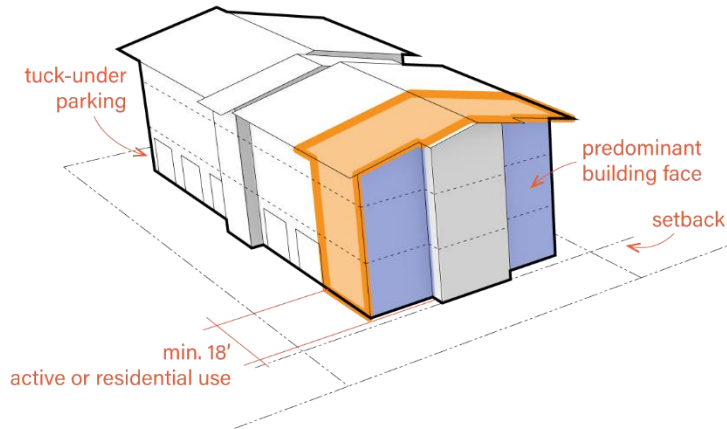
- b. For projects including five or more dwelling units, parking shall not be located in the area between the front lot line and a line extended horizontally from the plane of the [predominant building face](#) to the edges of the lot. See **Figure 5**.

Figure 5: Parking Location



- c. Residential parking for projects including five or more dwelling units shall be screened from view in the following ways:
- i. Podium parking facing a [public frontage](#) shall be wrapped with Uses for Active Frontage as allowed in the applicable zone district or residential uses on all levels facing a public frontage to a depth of at least 18 feet average, measured on each level perpendicular from the [predominant building face](#). (Also see Sections 24.12.185.13 Corridor Frontage and .14 Ground Floor Design.)
 - ii. Tuck-under parking shall be entirely contained within the building and screened by garage doors. Where it faces a [public frontage](#) and is setback less than 15 feet from the public right of way, tuck-under parking shall be wrapped with active or residential uses to a depth of at least 18 feet average, measured perpendicular from the [predominant building face](#). See **Figure 6**. (Also see Sections 24.12.185.13 Corridor Frontage and .14 Ground Floor Design.)

Figure 6: Tuck-Under Parking Screening



- d. The entire perimeter of a surface parking area that fronts onto a side or rear yard, except the width of the access, shall be screened by buildings, evergreen [buffer landscaping](#) to a minimum depth of 3 feet, or fences that are at least 75 percent opaque. Fences or hedges shall not be greater than, nor allowed to exceed 8 feet in height on an interior side yard or rear yard, or 3.5 feet in height in a front or exterior side yard. (Also see Section 24.12.280.)
- e. In any multi-level parking structure, the exterior shall be fully screened, and automobile headlamps shall be shielded so as to not be visible from adjacent parcels, streets, public parks, publicly accessible outdoor space, or designated open space area.
- f. Driveways and approaches shall comply with the standards set forth in Municipal Code Sections 15.20 and 24.12.280 and the driveway approach standard detail included with the public works standards in effect at the time of design review and shall be designed in accordance with AASHTO Green Book sight distance standards. Ingress/egress to driveway approaches may be limited based on the results of a Transportation Study.

24.12.185.8 Landscape and Buffering

Goals: *To enhance the urban forest, provide shade for buildings and sidewalks, incorporate landscape, and provide visual buffering into new development in a way that is visually appealing and consistent with the character of Santa Cruz.*

In R-districts and in the R-T(A), R-T(B), R-T(D) and R-T(E) districts, the goal of landscape is also to soften the massing of buildings as they front the street. In commercial and mixed-use districts, the goal is also to create a landscaped edge to sidewalks and encourage the incorporation of terraces and balconies for usable outdoor space (livability), architectural interest (modulation), and access to outdoor space for public health and passive cooling (resilience).

Word on the Street

Survey Results

- When asked what features residents would like to allow in a larger front setback, 23 percent of respondents voted for landscaping.

Focus Group Feedback

- “[The] trees are memorable and special, [and] they create peace. There’s a lot of access to nature...biodiversity.”
- “[Referring to sidewalk amenities:] more emphasis on greenscaping, [being] environmentally conscious. **More native trees and plants**, and more trees in general.”

- a. In all R-districts and in the R-T(A), R-T(B), R-T(D) and R-T(E) districts:
 - i. All open spaces in the front setback (excluding areas for driveways and sidewalks), shall be at least 75 percent landscape (planted materials) that are selected to comply with WELO standards as found in Chapter 16.16 of the Santa Cruz Municipal Code that are current at the time of design review. The selected planted materials shall be WELO compliant even when the formal requirements of the WELO do not apply to the project.
 - ii. Selected plant species for the site shall incorporate a mix of trees, shrubs, and ground cover.
 - iii. Turf areas shall include no more than 25 percent of the total irrigated area on the site.
- b. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA, and all MU zones:
 - i. All [public frontages](#) shall incorporate 12 square feet of planted area for each 30 linear feet of building frontage counted by rounding up to the next increment of planted area. For example, a building with a 31-foot building frontage would incorporate a minimum of 24 square feet of landscaped area (two increments of 12 square feet).
 - ii. This may be provided in small, individual pockets of planting, or in larger planted areas, and must occur within the property line. This standard applies regardless of ground floor use.
 - iii. A [landscaped buffer](#) of at least 5 feet in depth and the length of the property line shall be provided at the rear property line on sites that are 100 feet or greater in depth and abut a residentially zoned parcel at the rear property line.

- iv. Plants shall be selected to comply with WELO standards found in Chapter 16.16 of the Santa Cruz Municipal Code that are current at the time of design review.
- v. Street Trees shall be planted in the public right of way, or within 5 feet of the public right of way, at a rate of 1 tree per each 30 feet of site frontage. Spacing of trees shall be sufficient to accommodate the mature canopy of each specimen, and installation shall be in compliance with the planting requirements of the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments, including the Street Tree Master Plan, and the requirements of Municipal Code Sections 13.30, 15.20, and 24.12.186 as applicable at the time of design review.
- vi. Any plantings or landscaping materials within surface parking areas are required to comply with the City's Low-Impact Development (LID) standards, Storm Water Best Management Practices, and Storm Water Management Program.
- c. Refuse/Recycling Storage Facility: Enclosures for refuse bins or dumpsters are required of all new multi-family and mixed-use residential projects with three or more housing units or any commercial development as set forth in the City of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works Refuse Container Storage Facility Standard Design Policy.

24.12.185.9 Usable Open Space

Goal: *To enhance the livability of new residential buildings with well-designed, functional open spaces with landscaping and amenities for residents to enjoy.*

- a. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA and all MU districts:
 - i. At least 40 square feet of private open space and at least 20 square feet of common open space shall be provided per dwelling unit.
 - ii. Common open space may be substituted for private open space at a ratio of 2:1 (i.e., 80 square feet of common open space may be substituted for 40 square feet of private open space).
- b. In all R-districts and in the R-T(A), R-T(B), R-T(D) and R-T(E) districts: the amount of required open space shall be determined by the underlying zone district standard.
- c. In all districts where residential uses are an allowed use:
 - i. Private usable open space must be at least 4 feet in any horizontal

Word on the Street

Focus Group Feedback

"[In a previous living situation with communal courtyards] having those communal spaces, they were not used as much as you would think. They were often empty...Having the **individual spaces will probably be used more often.** Having communal space is important, but people will find communal space elsewhere."

"People would use [communal space] sometimes for soccer games and sometimes for a birthday party, but it wasn't used on a day-to-day basis the way a private space is. You can't go to the park and, you know, have your coffee, and you can't let your dog poop wherever you want, and you can't grow your basil and know that no one else's dog is pooping on it."

dimension and common usable open space must be at least 15 feet in any horizontal dimension.

- ii. There shall be no limit to the percent of the required open space that may be assigned to private balcony or patio areas.
- iii. No less than 25 percent of the total common open space area shall be permanently landscaped with live plant material incorporating trees, shrubs, and groundcover.
- iv. A minimum of three of the following features shall be incorporated into common open spaces and maintained on the site:
 - 1. Fixed or movable seating
 - 2. Picnic-style tables
 - 3. Shade trees (see allowances under 24.22.586, Open Space, Useable) or shaded canopy
 - 4. Community garden
 - 5. Flowering plants
 - 6. Native habitat
 - 7. Play area for pets
 - 8. Educational or interpretive information about geographic, historic, or ecological features, such as plaques about relevant tribal history or indigenous plant information
 - 9. Outdoor kitchen equipment or fire pit
 - 10. Children's play equipment
 - 11. Sports courts
 - 12. Public art or interactive art, such as a life-size chess game, sculpture, or murals
 - 13. Spa, pool, or hot tub
- d. Common open space may be provided on building rooftops as roof decks. Such usable open space is not counted as an additional story if rooftop structures comply with Municipal Code Section 24.12.150 Height Limits Modifications.
- e. Up to 30 percent of required common open space may be provided as publicly accessible open space that supports a retail or restaurant use, such as a courtyard, outdoor dining area, or other [Active Use](#) (i.e. not auto or bike parking), which is open to the sky, and is not less than 15 feet in any horizontal dimension, so long as the space is freely accessible to building residents without requirements to patronize the business use. Areas that are reserved exclusively for customers will not count toward required open space.

Word on the Street

A wide variety of menu options are provided so that developers and architects can decide what may work best in a certain location. This is based on community feedback that amenity needs vary by location. One participant wrote:

"Generic public spaces are often "sterile" and underused, it's essential to **determine what makes some spaces work as opposed to others.**"

Building Design (Sections 24.12.185.10 – 24.12.185.17)

24.12.185.10 Neighborhood Transition

Goal: To create a transition between new development and existing neighborhoods, provide privacy for current and future residents, and minimize potential shading on neighboring residents.

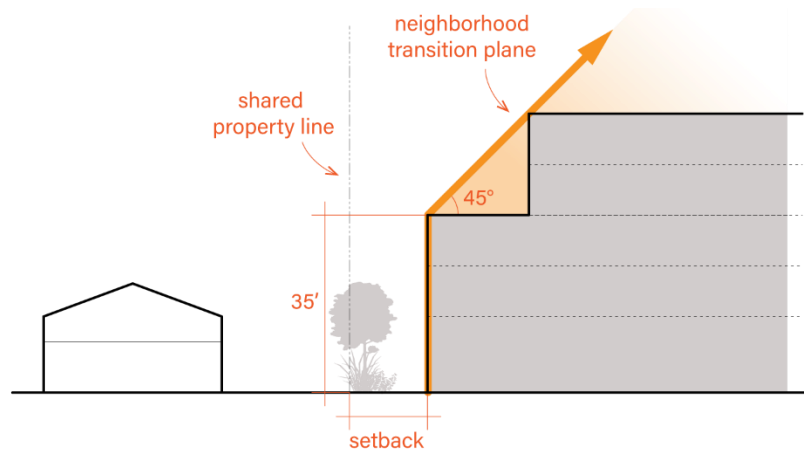
- a. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA, and all MU districts: along property lines that abut an R-district:
 - i. Buildings shall not intercept a 45-degree neighborhood transition plane inclined inward from the underlying setback, starting at a height of 35 feet above grade. See **Figure 7**.

Word on the Street

Community Feedback

Community members who attended public hearings and participated in our online web activity frequently mentioned the idea of a **daylight plane**. Development professionals also responded well to this idea, citing its clarity compared to the previously proposed standard to reduce the floorplate of only the uppermost story of taller buildings.

Figure 7: Neighborhood Transition Plane



- ii. Private or shared balconies and decks shall not extend into an underlying setback.
- iii. The occupiable area of roof decks, including any deck on roof area falling under the neighborhood transition plane, shall be set back at least 3 feet from the building edge and any railings, shade structures, or accessory structures shall not intersect the required neighborhood transition plane. Rooftop lighting shall also comply with [Lighting](#) requirements of Section 24.12.185.17.

24.12.185.11 Roof Form

Goal: *To ensure that the tops of buildings are designed with architectural interest, and to reduce the bulk of buildings as they meet the sky.*

- a. Buildings shall be designed with variation in roof form. The number of required roof forms shall be calculated at a ratio of at least one roof form for every 30 feet of frontage and shall be located within 15 feet of the [predominant building face](#) on all building frontages. On Corner lots or double-frontage lots, standards for variation in roof form will apply to all frontages. See **Figure 8**.
 - i. Roof form is defined as a geometric plane or set of planes which form the top enclosure of a volumetric area below it/them. Common types of roof forms are gabled, hipped, sloped, flat, and flat with a decorative parapet. Examples of roof forms are illustrated in **Figure 9**.
 - ii. A change in roof form must be combined with a change in height of at least 3 feet, a horizontal change in plane of at least 4 feet, or a change in roof pitch. See **Figure 10** for examples. Changes in roof form shall not exceed allowed building heights, as defined by the underlying zone district.
 - iii. Smaller roof forms that cover enclosed space (such as dormers and bay windows) count as individual roof forms if they are at least 36 square feet in horizontal surface area. Bay windows located on a wall below another roof form will not count as individual roof forms regardless of size.
 - iv. Unenclosed space (such balconies, terraces, porticos, and belfries) count as individual roof forms if they are at least 48 square feet in horizontal area. Balconies should also conform to the standards for Useable Open Space in Section 24.12.185.8.
 - v. For the purposes of calculating the number of required roof forms on a building, each increment of 30 feet of building frontage requires an additional roof form, counted by rounding up to the next whole number. For example, a frontage of 31 feet would be required to provide two roof forms. However, there is no maximum dimension for any one roof form, nor are roofs required to be designed in 30-foot increments.

Figure 8: Applying Roofline Standards

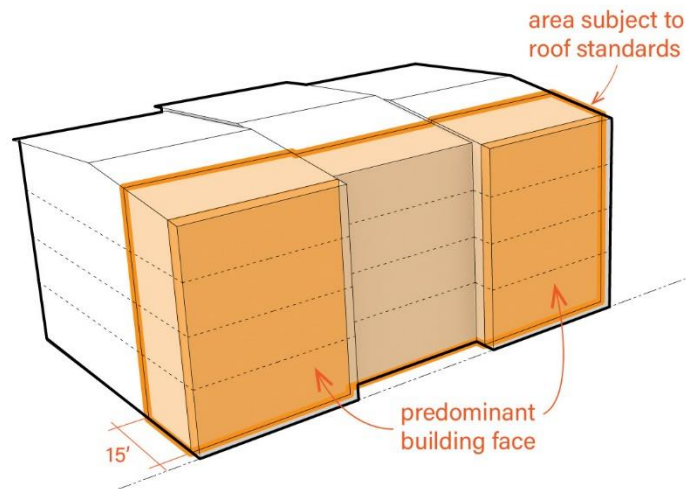
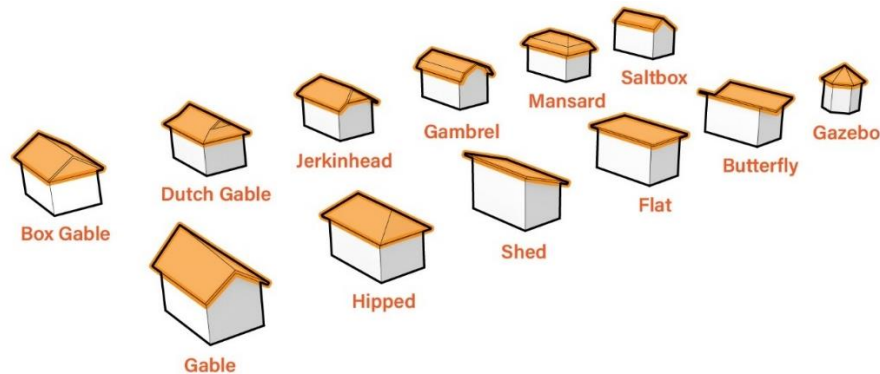


Figure 9: Roof Forms

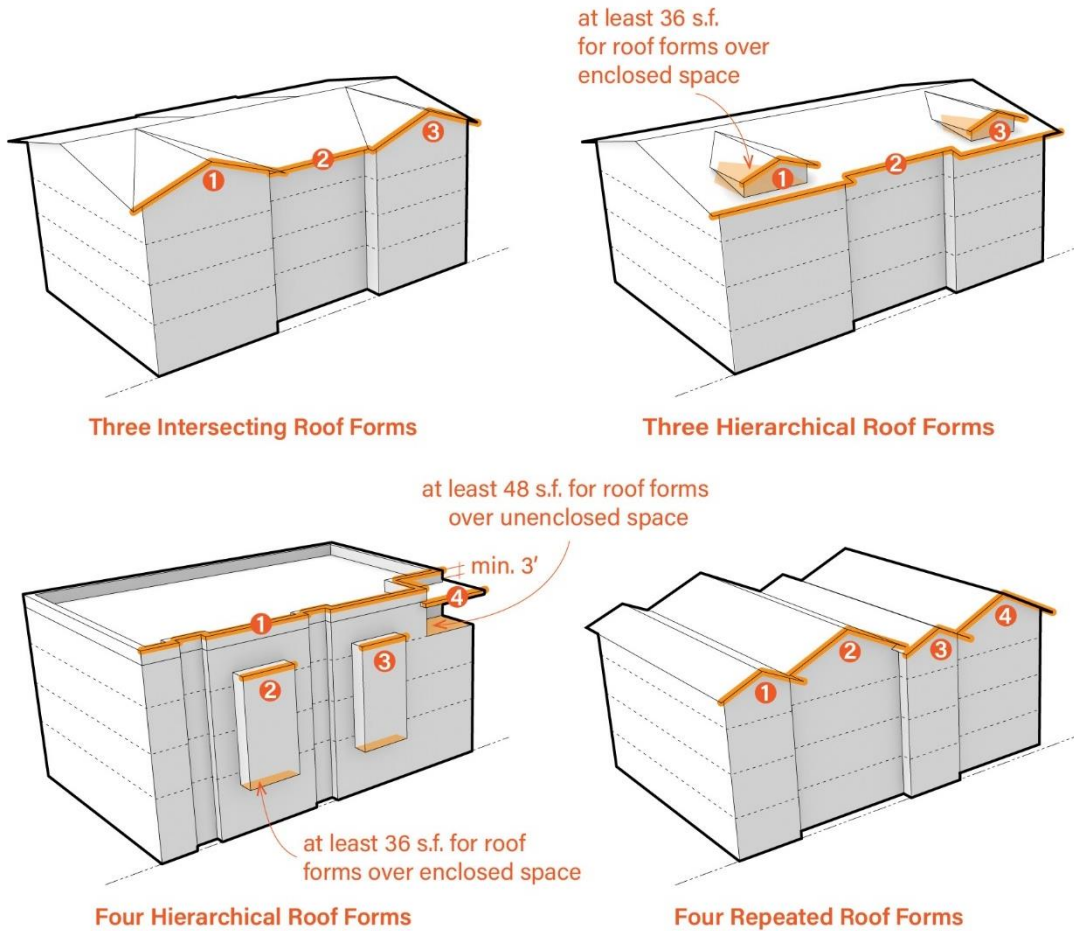


b. Combining Roof Forms

- i. The required number of roof forms may intersect to create more complex roof forms or may be organized in a hierarchy. Examples of combined roof forms are illustrated in **Figure 10**.
- ii. Roof forms may be repeated, as with a flat roof that steps up or down, or a sawtooth.
- iii. Where two or more forms intersect or combine to create more complex forms, each is counted as an individual roof form. For example, two hipped forms may intersect to create a hip and valley form, which would count as two roof forms.
- iv. Where two or more roof forms are organized in a hierarchy, each is counted as an individual roof form. For example, the dominant roof form may be a hipped roof, which has two dormers with open gable roofs, which would count as three roof forms. Another example is a flat roof on a building that has two bay windows with flat roofs, each at least 36 square feet in area. See **Figure 10** for examples.

- v. For flat roofs and flat roofs with decorative parapets, changes in roofline must be accompanied by a minimum 2-foot change in height relative to the adjacent roof form. For buildings that are three stories or taller, the minimum change in height shall be 3 feet. This change in height shall be measured to the top of the parapet, where present. Changes in roof form shall not exceed allowed building heights, as defined by the underlying zone district.

Figure 10: Combining and Counting Roof Forms



24.12.185.12 Building Modulation

Goal: To break up large building faces and create visual interest for pedestrians, neighbors, and visitors.

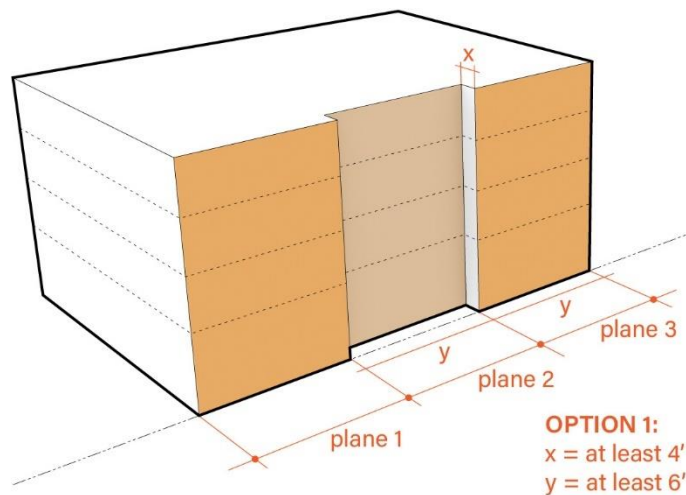
- a. Where no other modulation controls apply (e.g., an Area Plan), building faces that are longer than 30 feet wide shall be articulated in one of the following three ways.
 - i. Provide a horizontal change in plane for every 30 feet building face, rounded up to the next whole number (e.g., a frontage of 31 feet would be required to provide two changes in plane). As shown in **Figure 11**, the change in plane must be at least 4 feet deep and 6 feet wide, and must be open to the sky; or

Word on the Street

Focus Group Feedback

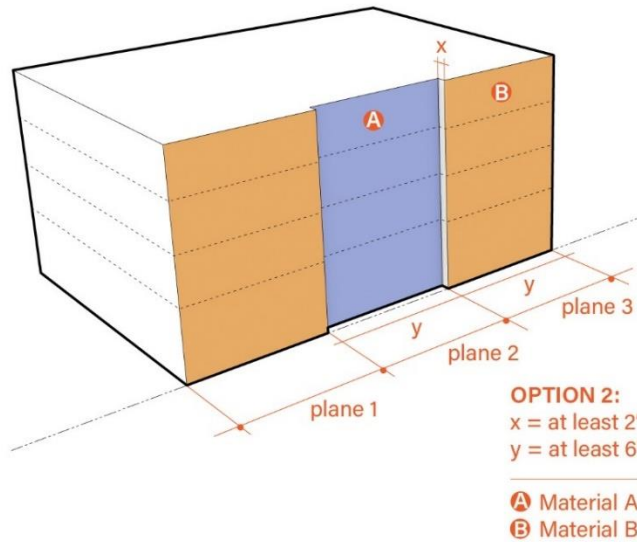
(Responding to images of different buildings) “[The image on the left] is very monolithic. It’s like a big slab presented at you. Even though it has only one more floor than the one on the right, **it looks visually so much more obtrusive because it doesn’t have any architectural features to break it up.**”

Figure 11: Building Modulation – Option One



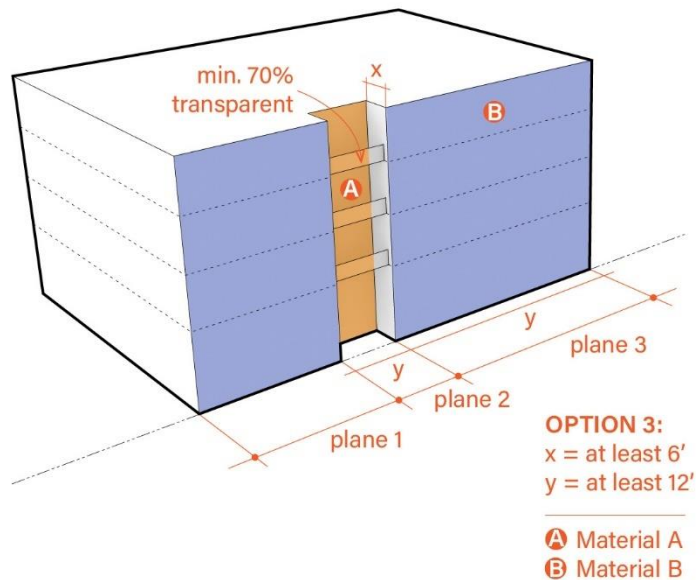
- ii. Provide a horizontal change in plane for every 30 feet of building face, rounded up to the nearest whole number (e.g., a building face of 31 feet would be required to provide two changes in plane). As shown in **Figure 12**, the change in plane must be at least 2 feet deep and 6 feet wide, and be combined with a change in material; or

Figure 12: Building Modulation – Option Two



- iii. Provide a horizontal change in plane at an interval of 50 feet or less. As shown in **Figure 13**, the change in plane must be at least 6 feet deep and 12 feet wide, and be combined with a change in material. When implemented as building notches, such notches may contain balconies, as long as the railing is at least 70 percent see-through or transparent.

Figure 13: Building Modulation – Option Three



- b. Building faces that are less than 30 feet wide are not required to have a change in plane incorporated into their design.

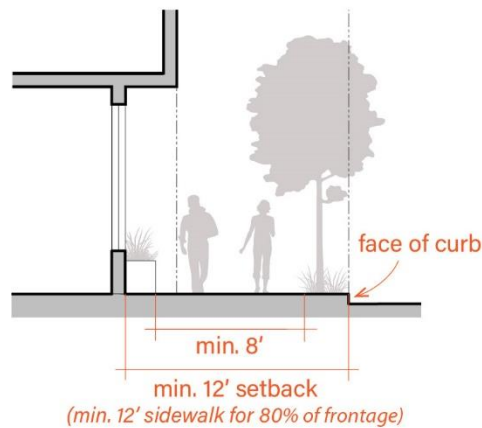
- c. Projections from the building face including balconies, awnings, signs, and decorative elements are not considered to be changes in plane.

24.12.185.13 Corridor Frontage

Goal: To ensure that buildings in denser, mixed-use districts are designed with functional, human-scaled ground floors that promote walkability and provide space for local businesses.

- a. Unless otherwise dictated by an Area Plan, the ground floor frontage facing a [Corridor](#) shall be set back at least 12 feet from the face of the curb. See **Figure 14**.
 - i. This may be achieved by setting back only the ground floor, but in no case shall any portion of the proposed building extend into or over the public right-of-way, except that awnings and balconies at the second story or above may extend into the right of way no more than 3 feet. No projection shall be closer than 8 feet to the centerline of an alley, driveway, or path of automobile circulation except with the approval of the City Engineer based on considerations of public safety and welfare (e.g., utility considerations, emergency access, etc.).
 - 1. This setback area shall not be counted toward the requirement to incorporate Uses for Active Frontage, and the area shall be used as a 12-foot-wide sidewalk over at least 80 percent of the frontage.
 - 2. In no case shall the passable sidewalk width be less than 8 feet without approval of an Administrative Use Permit and revocable license as allowed under Municipal Code Section 24.12.192 for Outdoor Extension Areas, in which case the passable sidewalk width shall not be less than 6 feet.

Figure 14: Corridor Frontage



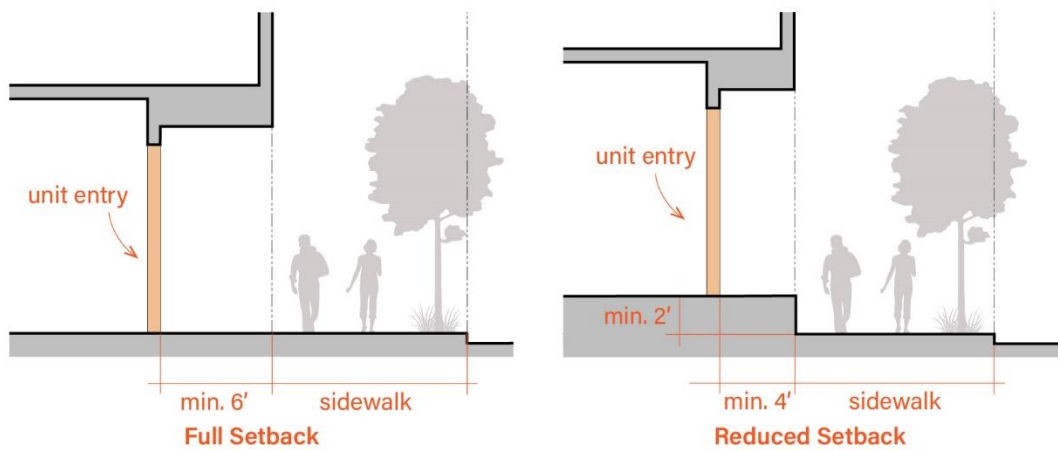
24.12.185.14 Ground Floor Design

Goal: To ensure that buildings in commercial districts are designed with ground floors that support walkability with functional commercial or [live-work](#) frontages. Also, where residential units are allowed, to ensure well-designed frontages that strike a balance between privacy for the resident and activation of the sidewalk.

- a. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA, and all MU districts, commercial ground-floors shall be designed as follows:

- i. Minimum ground floor frontage transparency of 70 percent between a height of 2 feet and 12 feet measured parallel above sidewalk grade.
- ii. Minimum ground floor height of 15 feet, measured from the top of the floor to the top of the floor of the next level, or 10 feet if a mezzanine is included.
 1. In a commercial space, any mezzanine shall be set back at least 30 feet from the building frontage and shall occupy no more than one-third of the area of the ground floor.
- iii. Entries shall be inset from the building face at least 2 feet.
- b. In the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, PA, and C-B zones where residential development is allowed, ground floor residential units shall not occupy more than 50 percent of a [public frontage](#). Residential units on the ground floor may be designed as [Live-Work](#) units or may be exclusively residential units.
- c. Any [Live-Work](#) units shall be designed as follows:
 - i. Live-Work units are only permitted on the ground floor.
 - ii. Minimum ground floor height of 15 feet, measured from the top of the floor to the top of the floor of the next level, or 10 feet if a mezzanine is included.
 1. In a Live-Work unit any mezzanine shall be set back at least 18 feet from the building frontage and shall occupy no more than one-half of the area of the ground floor.
 - iii. Minimum ground floor depth of 18 feet.
 - iv. Minimum unit/storefront width of 12 feet.
 - v. Minimum ground floor frontage transparency of 50 percent between a height of 2 feet and 12 feet measured parallel above sidewalk grade.
 - vi. Entries shall be inset from the building face at least 2 feet.
- d. In in the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, PA, and C-B zones where residential units other than [Live-Work](#) units are located at the ground floor, the following standards shall apply:
 - i. Where units are individually accessed, the entry must be set back at least 6 feet from the property line; this setback may be reduced to 4 feet if the unit is elevated at least 2 feet from the sidewalk (as with a stoop). See **Figure 15**.
 1. This may be a setback of the ground floor only, or a setback of the entire building face.
 2. This setback area may include an architectural feature indicating private space including but not limited to a railing, gate, entry landing, or doorstep.
 3. This area may include landscaping or private open space for an individual unit. In order to qualify as private open space, the area must be separated from the sidewalk by one of the following mechanisms intended to indicate the privacy of the space:
 - An increase in elevation of at least 2 feet;
 - A railing or gate;
 - Clustered landscaping, as in a hedge or other dense planting, not exceeding 42 inches in height.

Figure 15: Ground Floor Residential Entry Setback



- e. Where a unit does not have individual access to the sidewalk, active living areas (including living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens, but excluding bedrooms, bathrooms, and hallways) are required at the building frontage, and must be set back at least 4 feet from the sidewalk; this setback may be reduced to 2 feet if the unit is elevated at least 2 feet above the sidewalk. See **Figure 16**.
 - i. This may be a setback of the ground floor only, or of the entire building face.
 - ii. This setback area shall incorporate landscaping or planters.

Figure 16: Ground Floor Residential – Without Individual Access



24.12.185.15 Architectural Detail

Goal: To highlight the prominence of corner buildings along *Corridors*, ensure that buildings have an appropriate level of detailing, and ensure that building facades convey the qualities of substantiality and depth.

- a. Buildings that are mixed-use and/or three stories in height or greater shall visually differentiate the ground floor from the floors above by one or more of the following:

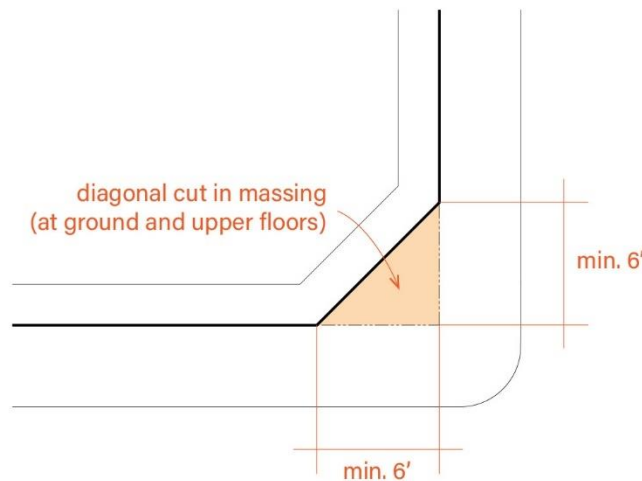
- i. a change in material; and/or
 - ii. a change in plane; and/or
 - iii. a cornice line, belly band, or similar horizontal element.
- b. Buildings at the intersection of a [Corridor](#) and another street (including another Corridor) shall implement at least one of the following corner features:
- i. Increased height of the corner roofline of at least 3 feet above the adjacent roofline; and/or
 - ii. A chamfered corner with a diagonal cut at least 6 feet on either side of the corner. See **Figure 17**. This may be at the ground floor only, or for the entire height of the building; and/or

Word on the Street

Survey Results

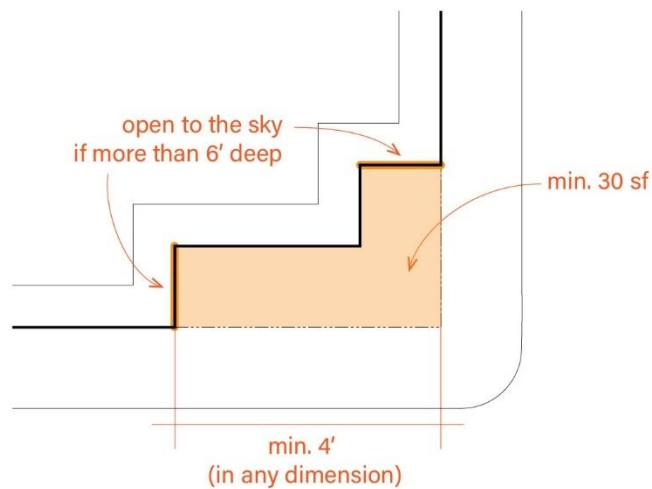
When asked “what is most important for a new building on a commercial corridor to include, even if it increases housing costs” **the most common response was architectural detail.**

Figure 17: Chamfered Corner



- c. A public open space of at least 30 square feet in area, and not less than 4 feet in any dimension, which may be designed to look like an extension of the sidewalk. Where the depth of this space is less than 6 feet, it may be open only at the ground floor. Where the depth of this space is greater than 6 feet it must be open to the sky. See **Figure 18**.

Figure 18: Public Open Space at Corner



- d. Buildings in the C-C, R-T(C), C-T, C-N, C-B, PA, and MU zones shall apply at least two categories of the following architectural features to each building face and to each level above ground floor. Buildings may incorporate different features on each face and level or may use the same two features on each face and level, so long as each face and level includes features from at least two categories.:
 - i. Category 1 - Terrace, balcony, or Juliette balcony with a minimum projection of 10 inches and a minimum width of 3 feet (at least one per level; see also Section 24.12.185.10 [Neighborhood Transition](#)).
 - ii. Category 2 - Windows detailed with a lintel, sill, or arch
 - iii. Category 3 - Awnings, louvers, or shutters
 - iv. Category 4 - Decorative cornice or decorative lighting sconces (see also Section 24.12.185.17)
- e. Windows shall be inset such that there is at least 2 inches between the plane of the glass and the plane of the building face for all windows above the ground floor; this depth shall be increased to 3 inches for buildings that include 4 or more stories, for all windows above the ground floor.
- f. Walls or portions of walls that are unfenestrated (without windows, balconies, or glass doors) that extend from grade up to the roofline are limited to a maximum horizontal width of 15 feet.

24.12.185.16 Building Materials

Goal: To ensure that building materials are high-quality, durable, convey a sense of permanence, and reflect the existing character of buildings in the urban environment.

- a. Building materials shall be selected according to the following criteria:
 - i. The following materials are acceptable for use on building faces: tile, brick, glass, metal (except as prohibited below), painted or sealed wood, concrete, stucco, plaster, adobe, and stone (engineered or natural), and [living walls](#) (as defined).

- ii. Unarticulated or flat panelized materials (such as metal, cement board, or GFRC panels) are prohibited on [public frontages](#) but may be incorporated on other building faces. Panels for modular and pre-fabricated construction are allowed (including sandwich panels).
 - iii. Any materials that are not explicitly listed here require an administrative design review permit to ensure that approved materials conform to the goal of this section.
- b. Buildings shall incorporate two or more of the accepted materials listed above or as approved in the design of each building face. No single material may make up more than 85 percent of any building face. This can include materials for building decoration (e.g., awnings, louvers, balconies, cornice lines, or windowsills), but does not include fenestration (glass, frames, or other elements of windows and doors).
- c. Vinyl windows are prohibited in the following circumstances:
- i. Any mixed-use or residential buildings more than three stories in height.
 - ii. On a building face oriented toward a public street other than an alley of a mixed use or residential building three stories in height or less.
- d. At building corners, except for [living walls](#), all materials shall wrap around the corner to a depth of at least 4 inches. This includes corners of insets, reveals, or changes in plane that are 4 inches or greater in depth, as with a balcony, ground floor entry, or change in plane. See examples shown in **Figure 19**.
- e. [Living walls](#) shall meet the following standards:
- i. The living wall shall be permanently integrated into the exterior design of the building face upon which they are planted.
 - ii. The living wall shall not be located on a north, or north-east-facing building face.
 - iii. The living wall shall include an integrated irrigation system.
 - iv. The living wall shall be created using materials specifically designed for the purpose of installing and maintaining plants within the intended context (considering sun, shade, fog, rain exposure, and any other relevant environmental factors) on an exterior building face.
 - v. Components of a living wall shall be considered with other landscape elements, and are subject to the requirements of the City’s WELO.
 - vi. Nothing in this section shall regulate or require the installation of living walls on the interior of any building.

Word on the Street

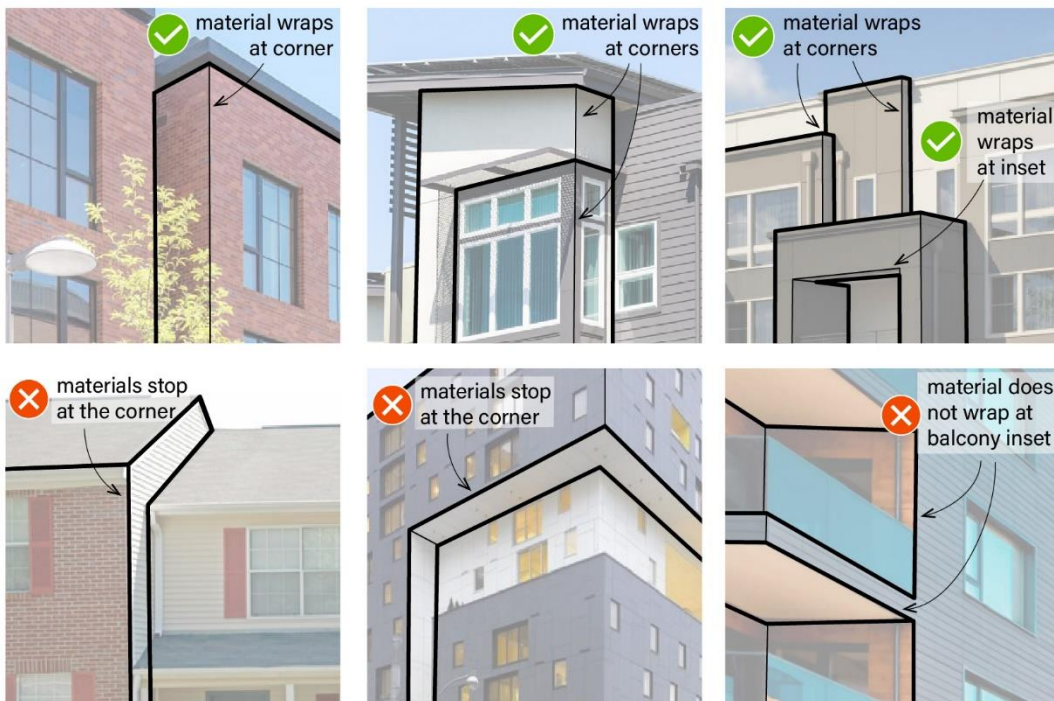
Survey Results

High-quality materials and material application were among the most frequently mentioned ideas in survey-takers’ free responses.

Focus Group Feedback

(Responding to images of different buildings) “[I] especially [liked] the building material. I like the brick and whatever it is above it, wood or metal. I like that change [in materials].”

Figure 19: Material Application



24.12.185.17 Lighting

Goal: To ensure that public areas of buildings are lit for wayfinding and safety, while minimizing impacts of glare, light trespass, and light pollution in order to help make new development Dark Sky friendly.

- a. Individual exterior luminaires shall be shielded to direct light downward and shall not exceed 1,260 lumens. Exterior light fixtures shall utilize light sources with a color temperature that does not exceed 3000 Kelvin.
 - i. A luminaire is considered to be fully shielded if it is constructed and installed in such a manner that all light emitted by the luminaire, either directly from the lamp or a diffusing element, or indirectly by reflection or refraction from any part of the luminaire, is projected below the horizontal plane through the

Word on the Street

Several community members provided suggestions to clarify and refine the lighting standards. One resident’s email:

“Good civic design should require that the building entrance(s) should be the main visual event, helping people orient and pay most attention to safety at important transitional zones. Everywhere else should be visually secondary. Humans perceive brightness (luminance) on a log scale, so 3:1 ratio means other surfaces will appear about half as bright.”

luminaire's lowest light-emitting part.

- b. Outdoor lights shall not blink, flash, flicker, or change intensity (excluding motion-detecting lights).
- c. Lighting shall be provided at parking lots, pedestrian paths, outdoor gathering spaces, building entries, and any other pedestrian-accessible areas.
- d. Lighting of outdoor service, loading, and storage areas shall not be visible from the street or adjacent properties.
- e. Rooftop lighting shall be set back at least 12 feet from the edge of any building face that is oriented towards any R-district.
- f. The height of luminaires shall not exceed 15 feet above grade for all luminaires other than those in parking areas or decorative sconces as allowed under F. 3. Architectural Detail.
- g. Building faces shall be illuminated such that surfaces located at least 10 horizontal feet away from building entries shall have at least 66 percent less luminance than surfaces within 10 horizontal feet of building entries. Compliance shall be demonstrated with a lighting plan.