

TOWN OF LOS GATOS
DRAFT OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS
November 15, 2022

PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The purpose of the Objective Design Standards is to ensure that new qualifying projects in Los Gatos provide high-quality architecture, integrate with surrounding development, and include well-designed amenities and outdoor areas to enhance community character. These standards are intended to guide property owners, applicants, developers, and design professionals by providing clear design direction that enhances the Town's unique character and ensures a high-quality living environment.

California Government Code Section 65559.5 identifies Qualifying Housing Development Projects to include:

- Multi-family housing developments;
- Residential Mixed-Use Housing developments with a minimum of two-thirds of the square footage designated for residential use;
- Supportive and transitional housing development.

A Qualifying Housing Development Project shall be approved through a streamlined, ministerial review process when the project complies with these Objective Design Standards as well as complying with all existing objective development regulations in the Town, including but not limited to the following:

- General Plan
- Town Code
- Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Parks and Public Works Standards
- Santa Clara County Fire Department Requirements

These standards are only to be used for review of qualifying projects where Town review, approval, and/or denial is limited to only objective standards. Many projects will proceed through the standard review process, in which case the objective standards included herein would not apply.

ORGANIZATION

The Objective Design Standards are organized into two primary sections: Site Standards; and Building Standards. The Site Standards section includes objective standards for site layout and building placement; vehicular access and parking; and outdoor areas and amenities. The Building Standards section includes objective standards for building form and massing; façade articulation; materials; and roof design.

ATTACHMENT 1

KEY TERMS

Community recreation space in Residential Mixed-Use developments means public gathering spaces, such as: plazas, outdoor dining areas, squares, pocket parks, or other community areas for the use of all residents and the business patrons and tenants.

Community recreation space in multi-family developments means gathering spaces, such as: play areas, pool areas, patios, rooftop decks, or other community areas for the use of all residents.

Façade articulation means the division of a building façade into distinct sections; including the materials, patterns, textures, and colors that add visual interest to a building or façade.

Fenestration means the design, construction, and presence of any openings in a building, such as: windows, doors, vents, wall panels, skylights, curtain walls, and louvers.

Landscaping means an area devoted to plantings, lawn, ground cover, gardens, trees, shrubs, and other plant materials; excluding driveways, parking, loading, or storage areas.

Multi-family use means the use of a site for three or more dwelling units on the same site.

Objective Design Standards means development regulations that are measurable, verifiable, and knowable to all parties prior to submittal of a qualifying project. A planning review process based on objective standards involves streamlined ministerial review with no personal or subjective judgement by a public official.

Primary building means a building within which the principal or main use on a lot or parcel is conducted. Where a permissible use involves more than one building designed or used for the primary purpose on the subject property, each such building on the parcel shall be construed as constituting a primary building.

Private recreation space at ground level means an outdoor enclosed patio or deck accessible from a single dwelling unit.

Private recreation space above ground level means an outdoor balcony, terrace, or rooftop deck, accessible from a single dwelling unit.

Residential Mixed-Use means a development project where a variety of uses such as office, commercial, and institutional, are combined with residential use(s) in a single building or on a single site in an integrated project. Two thirds of the project square footage must be residential uses.

Transitional and supportive housing means a type of housing used to facilitate the movement of people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and independent living.

A. SITE STANDARDS

A.1. Pedestrian Access

- 1.1 All on-site buildings, entries, facilities, amenities, and vehicular and bicycle parking areas shall be internally connected with a minimum four-foot-wide pedestrian pathway or pathway network that may include use of the public sidewalk. The pedestrian pathway network shall connect to the public sidewalk along each street.
- 1.2 Pedestrian pathways within internal parking areas shall be separated from vehicular circulation by a physical barrier, such as a grade separation or a raised planting strip, of at least six inches in height and at least six feet in width. A pedestrian pathway is exempt from this standard where it crosses a parking vehicular drive aisle.

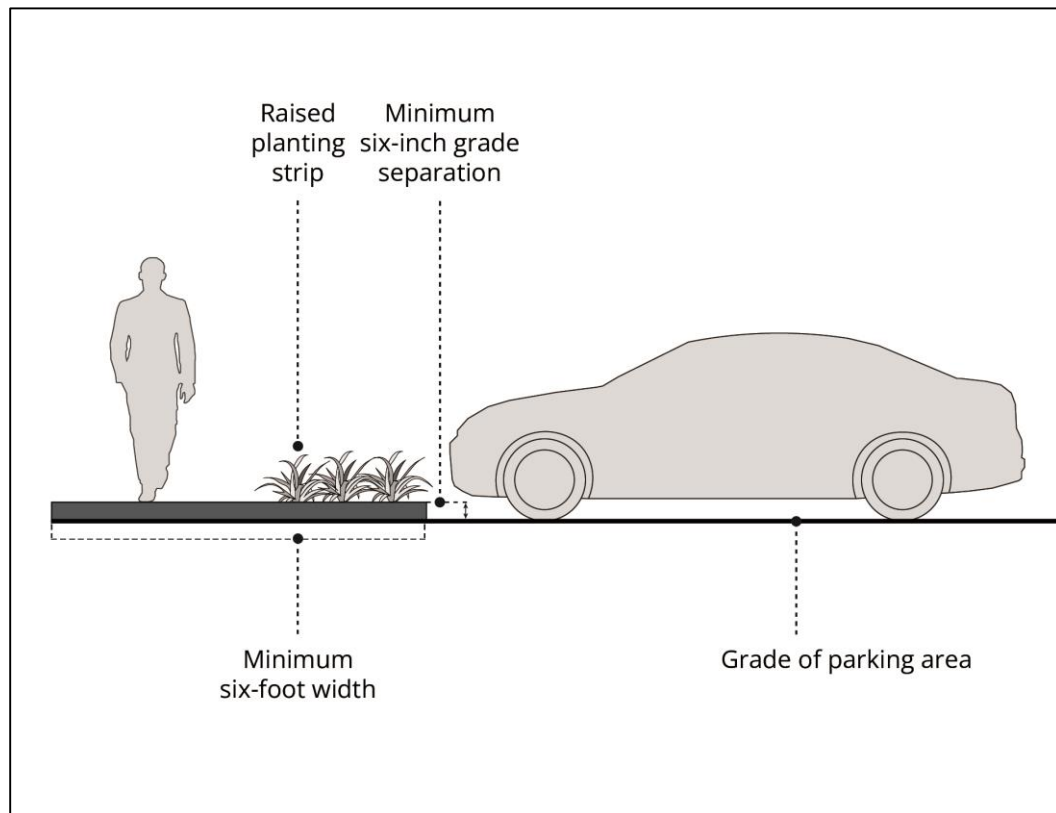


Figure A.1.2

A.2. Bicycle Access

- 2.1 Bicycle parking shall be located within 50 feet of at least one primary building entrance.
- 2.2 Multi-family residential buildings shall provide one bicycle parking space per dwelling unit.
- 2.3 Residential Mixed-Use projects shall provide one bicycle parking space per dwelling unit and one bicycle parking space per 2,000 square feet of non-residential space.

A.3. Vehicular Access

- 3.1 Off-street parking lots shall have vehicular circulation using an internal vehicular network that preclude the use of a public street for aisle-to-aisle internal circulation.

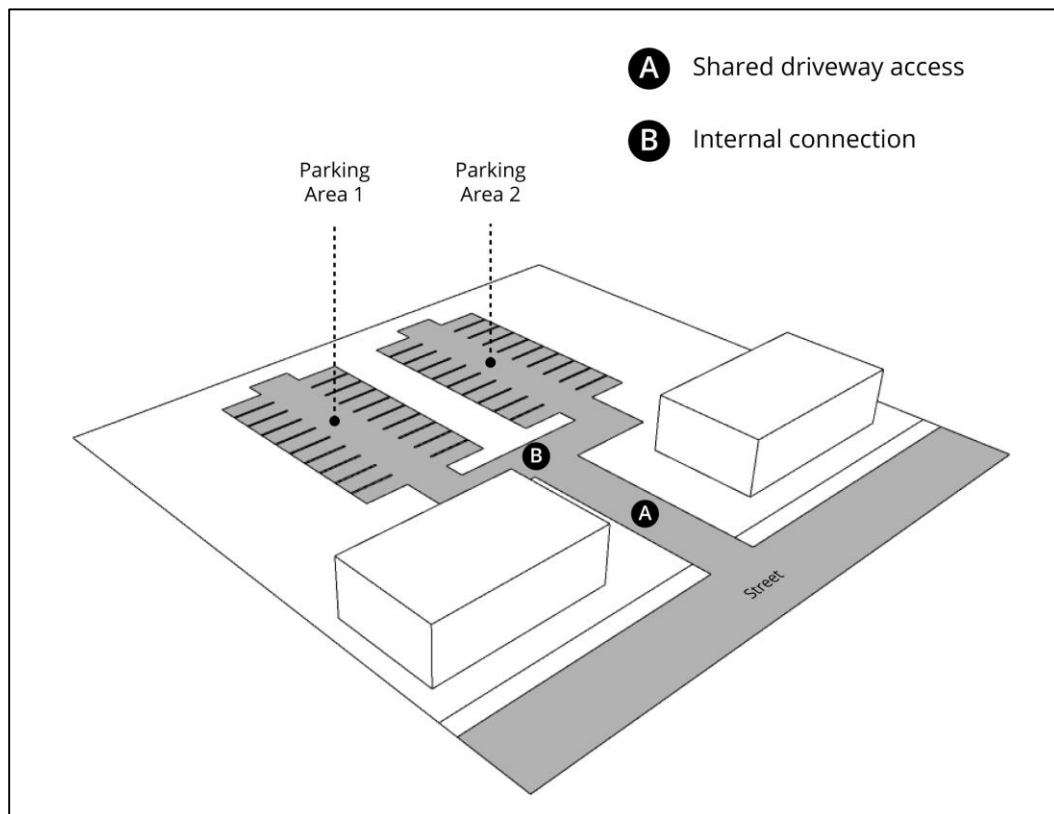


Figure A.3.1

A.4. Parking Location and Design

- 4.1 Surface parking lots and carports shall not be located between the primary building frontage and the street.
- 4.2 Uncovered parking rows with at least 15 consecutive parking spaces shall include a landscape area of six feet minimum width at intervals of no more than 10 consecutive parking stalls. One tree shall be provided in each landscape area.

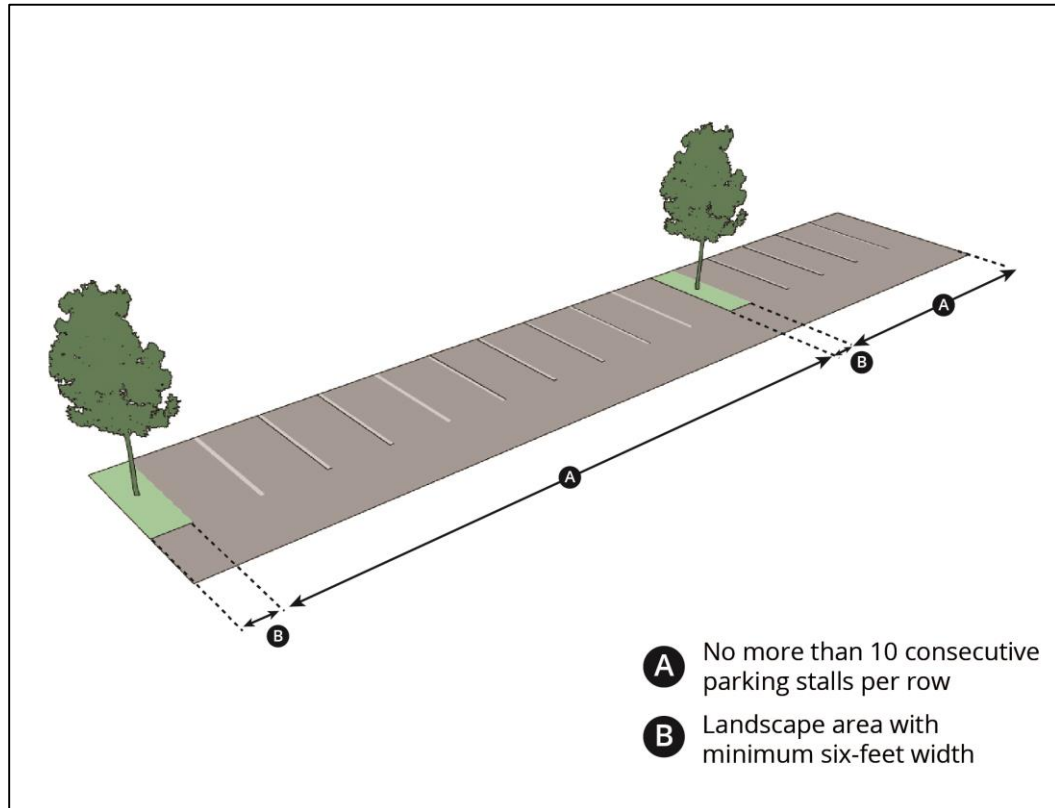


Figure A.4.2

A.5. Parking Structure Access

- 5.1 Any vehicular entry gate to a parking structure shall be located to allow a minimum of 18 feet between the gate and the back of the sidewalk to minimize conflicts between sidewalks and vehicle queuing.
- 5.2 A parking structure shall not occupy more than 50 percent of the building width of any street-facing façade, and it shall be recessed a minimum of five feet from the street-facing façade of the building.
- 5.3 For projects with five or more residential units and that have a vehicle access gate to the parking structure, a pedestrian gate shall also be provided.

A.6. Utilities

- 6.1 Pedestrian-oriented lighting shall be provided along all pedestrian paths in community recreation spaces. Exterior lighting fixtures shall be a minimum of three feet and a maximum of 12 feet in height. Light fixtures shall be placed along the pedestrian path at a spacing of no more than 30 linear feet.
- 6.2 Exterior lighting shall be fully shielded and restrain light to a minimum 30 degrees below the horizontal plane of the light source. Lighting shall be arranged so that the light will not shine directly on lands of adjacent residential zoned properties. Uplighting is prohibited.

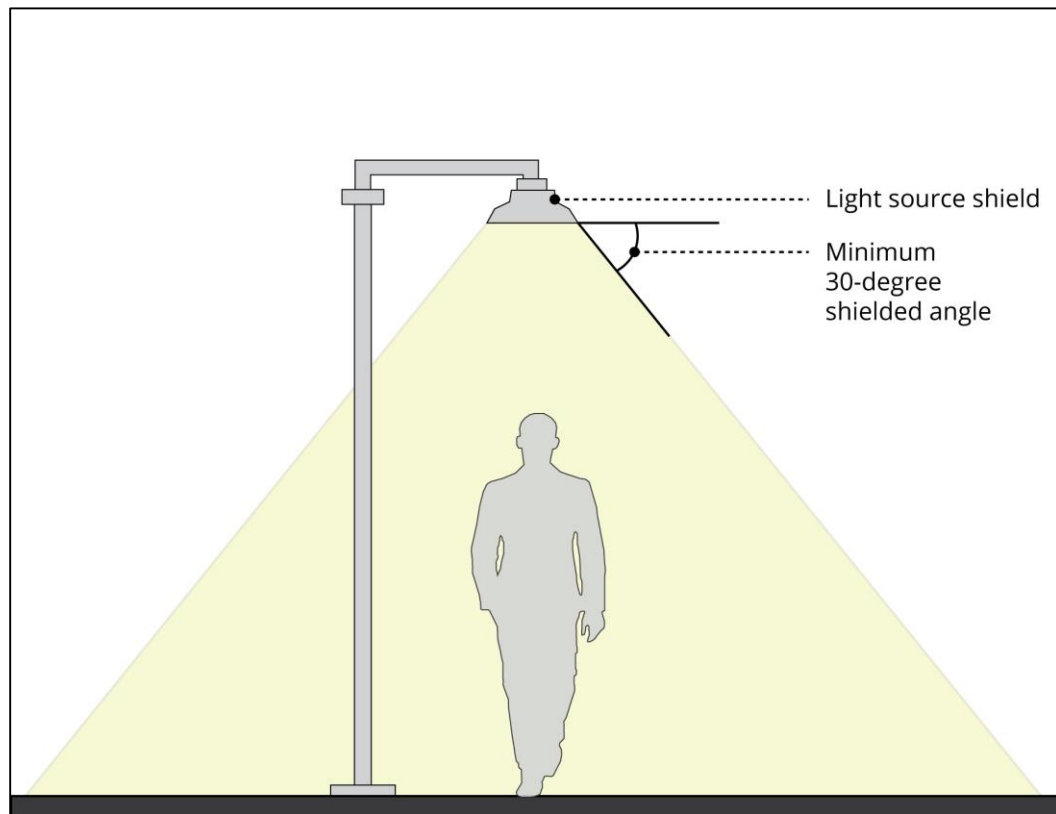


Figure A.6.2

- 6.3 Street level views of ground level utility cabinets, mechanical equipment, trash, and service areas shall be screened from sight with landscape planting, fencing, or a wall, as allowed by the Town Code. The screening shall be at least the same height as the item being screened and screening that is not landscape material shall be constructed with one or more of the materials used on the primary building.
- 6.4 Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened from view from the street. Solar equipment is exempt from this requirement.

A.7. Landscaping and Screening

- 7.1 At least 50 percent of the front setback area shall be landscaped.
- 7.2 A minimum 10-foot-wide landscape buffer shall be provided along the full length of the shared property line between multi-family or Residential Mixed-Use development and abutting residential properties. The buffer shall include the following:
- A solid masonry wall with a six-foot height, except within a street-facing setback where walls are not permitted; and

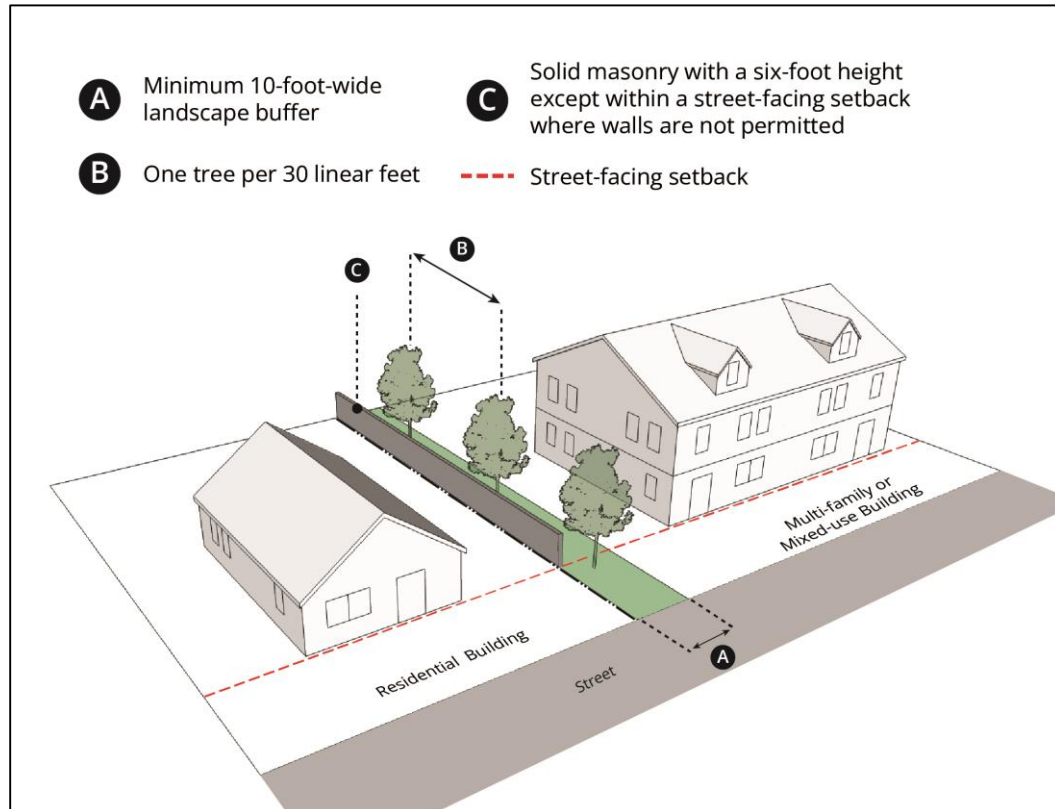


Figure A.7.2a

- Trees planted at a rate of at least one tree per 30 linear feet along the shared property line. Tree species shall be selected from the Town of Los Gatos Master Street Tree List and shall be a minimum 15-gallon size.
- 7.3 Surface parking lots shall be screened from view of the street with landscaping or a wall with a minimum three-foot height to screen the parking lot when not already screened by a primary building. When located in a street-facing setback, screening may not exceed a height of three feet.

A.8. Fencing

- 8.1 Fences, walls, and gates within required setbacks along all street frontages are prohibited unless used to screen on-site parking spaces from view from the street.
- 8.2 Chain link fencing is prohibited.
- 8.3 Perimeter barrier gates for vehicles and pedestrian entry gates shall have a maximum height of six feet.
- 8.4 Solid vehicular and pedestrian entry gates are prohibited. Entry gates shall be a minimum 50 percent open view.

A.9. Retaining Walls

- 9.1 Retaining walls shall not exceed five feet in height. Where an additional retained portion is necessary, multiple-terraced walls shall be used. Terraced walls shall set back at least three feet from the lower segment.
- 9.2 Retaining walls shall not run in a straight continuous direction for more than 50 feet without including the following:
 - a. A break, offset, or landscape pocket in the wall plane of at least three feet in length and two feet in depth; and
 - b. Landscaping at a minimum height of three feet at the time of installation along a minimum of 60 percent of the total length of the retaining wall.

A.10. Landscaped, Private, and Community Recreation Spaces

- 10.1 The landscaped, private, and community recreation spaces listed below are required for all qualifying projects. Community recreation spaces and private recreation spaces are calculated independent of each other. Landscaped areas within community recreation spaces can contribute to required minimums for both landscaped area and community recreation space.
 - a. Landscaped space: A minimum of 20 percent of the site area shall be landscaped.
 - b. Private recreation space: The minimum horizontal dimension is six feet in any direction and a minimum area of 60 square feet. The minimum vertical clearance required is eight feet. Private recreation space shall be directly accessible from the residential unit. Landscaped sections of private recreation space cannot count towards required landscaping requirements.
 - i. Each ground floor dwelling unit shall have a minimum of 120 square feet of usable private recreation space.

- ii. Each dwelling unit above the ground floor shall have a minimum of 60 square feet of usable private recreation space. Where multiple balconies are provided for a single unit, the 60-square-foot minimum can be an aggregate of all balconies, provide each balcony meets the requirements for minimum horizontal dimensions.
- c. Community recreation space: The minimum dimensions are 10 feet by six feet. A minimum of 60 percent of the community recreation space shall be open to the sky and free of permanent solid-roofed weather protection structures. Community recreation space shall provide shading for a minimum 15 percent of the community recreation space by either trees or structures, such as awnings, canopies, umbrellas, or a trellis. Tree shading shall be calculated by using the diameter of the tree crown at 15 years maturity. Shading from other built structures shall be calculated by using the surface area of the overhead feature.
 - i. Community recreation space shall be provided in Residential Mixed-Use developments at a minimum of 100 square feet per residential unit plus a minimum of two percent of the non-residential square footage.
 - ii. Community recreation space shall be provided in multi-family residential development projects at a minimum of 100 square feet per residential unit.
 - iii. A project with four or less residential units is exempt from community recreation space requirements.
 - iv. Landscaped roof space can satisfy both required landscaping requirements and community recreation space requirements. Landscaped roof space may not be used to satisfy more than 50 percent of the required landscaping for the site.

A.11. Building Placement

- 11.1 To ensure buildings provide a continuous frontage along sidewalks, development in commercial zones shall place at least 75 percent of any ground floor street-facing façade on or within five feet of the setback line designated in the Town Code.

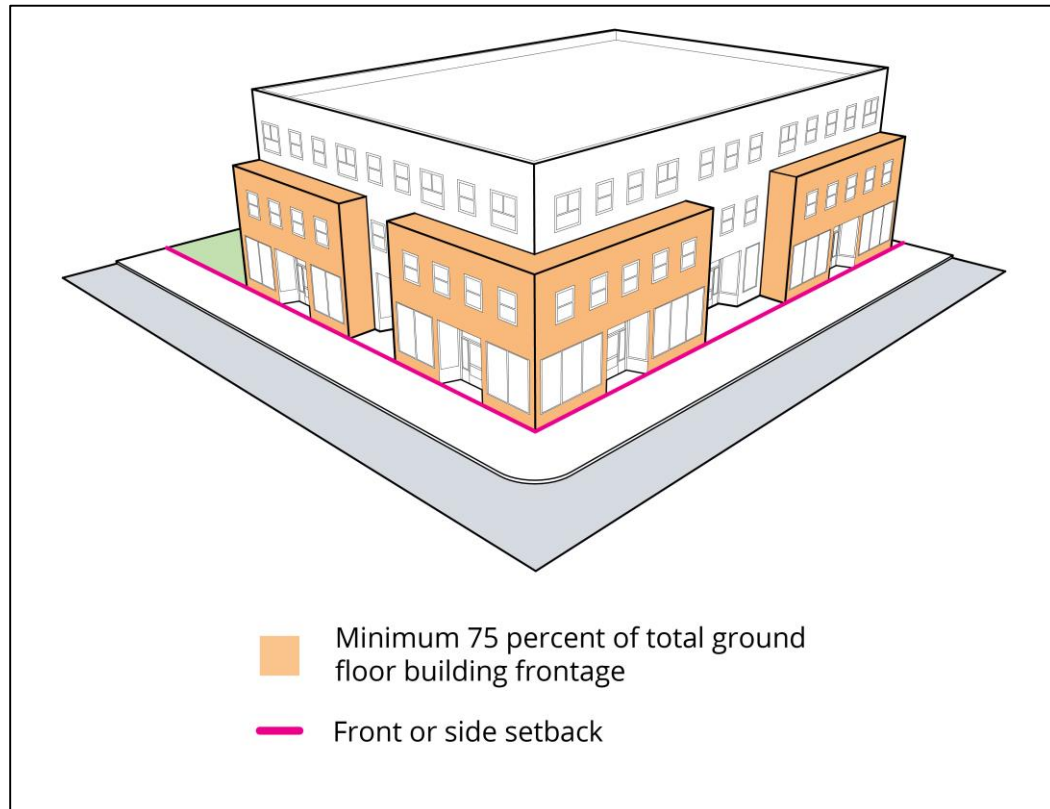


Figure A.11.1

- 11.2 A Residential Mixed-Use project with a ground-floor non-residential use shall provide site amenities on a minimum of 15 percent of the ground plane between the building and the front or street-side property line. The site amenities shall be comprised of any of the following elements:
- Landscape materials or raised planters;
 - Walls designed to accommodate pedestrian seating, no higher than 36 inches;
 - Site furnishings, including fountains, sculptures, and other public art; or
 - Tables and chairs associated with the ground floor use.

B. BUILDING STANDARDS

B.1. Massing and Scale

- 1.1 Multiple-story building façades that face a street shall incorporate breaks in the building mass by implementing a minimum of three of the following solutions along the combined façade area of all primary buildings facing the street:
- A minimum of 40 percent of the upper floor façade length shall step back from the plane of the ground-floor façade by at least five feet;

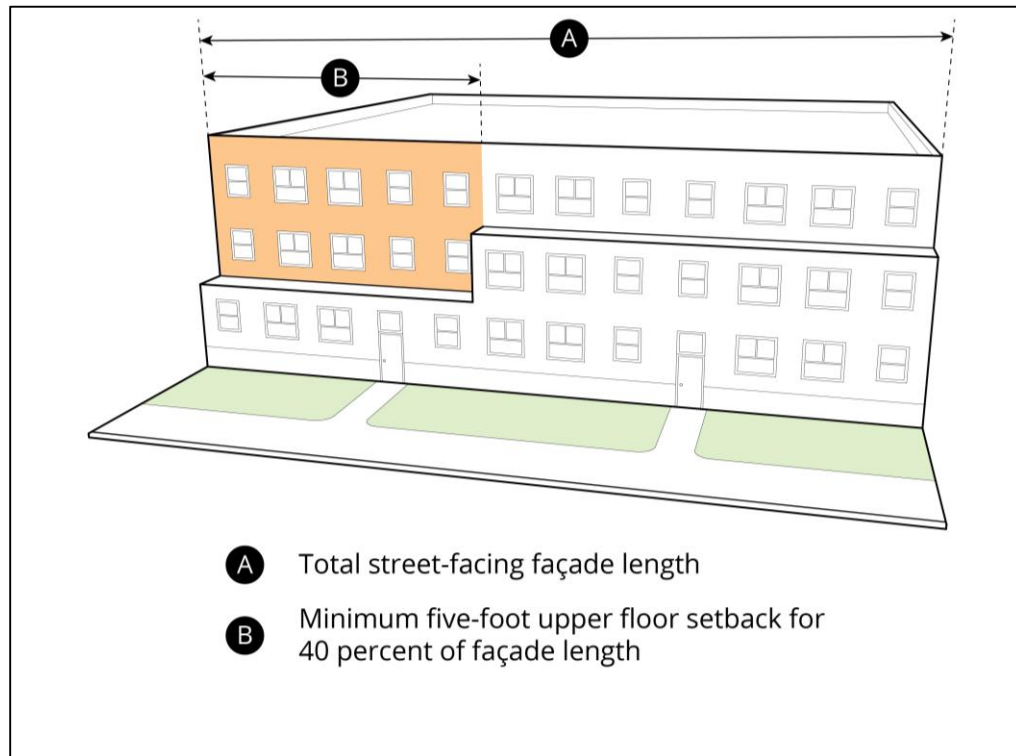


Figure B.1.1a

- b. Changes in the façade plane with a minimum change in depth of two feet for a minimum length along the façade of two feet at intervals of no more than 30 feet;

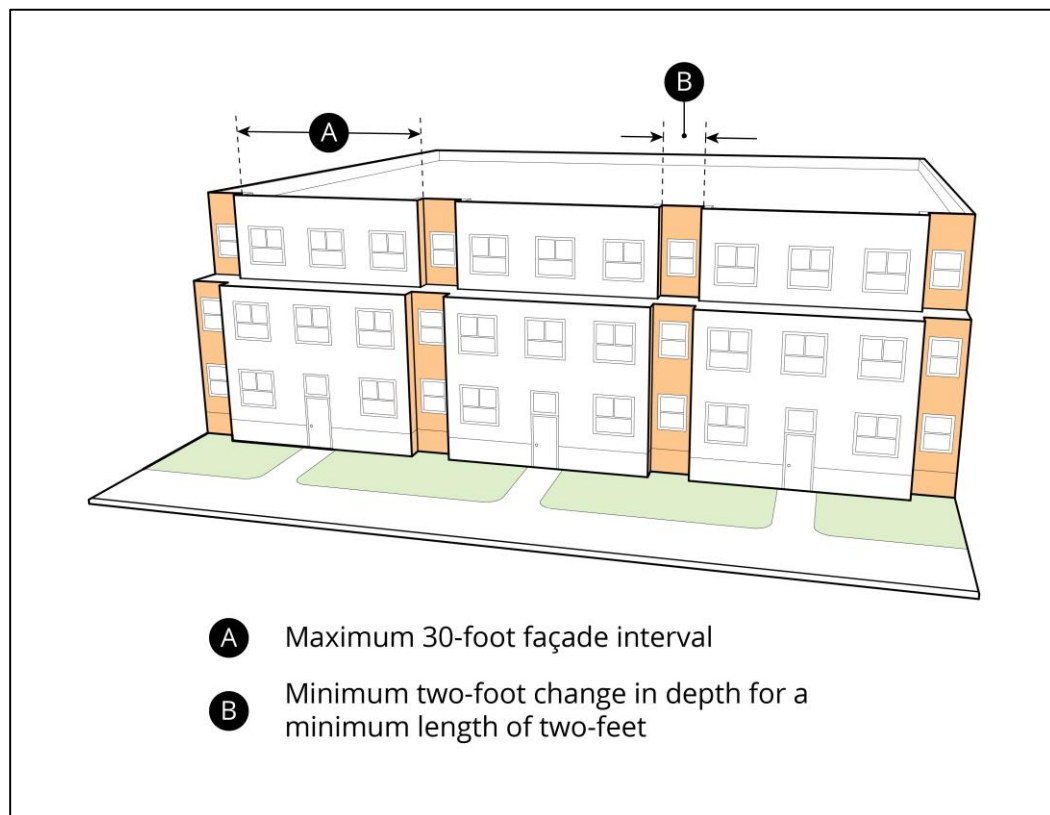


Figure B.1.1b

- c. Recessed façade plane to accommodate a building entry with a minimum ground plane area of 24 square feet. Where an awning or entry covering is provided, it can extend beyond the wall plane;



Figure B.1.1c

- d. An exterior arcade that provides a sheltered walkway within the building footprint with a minimum depth of eight feet. For a façade 50 feet or greater, the arcade must be a minimum length of 65 percent of the full building façade; for a facade less than 50 feet, the arcade must be a minimum of 80 percent of the full building façade.

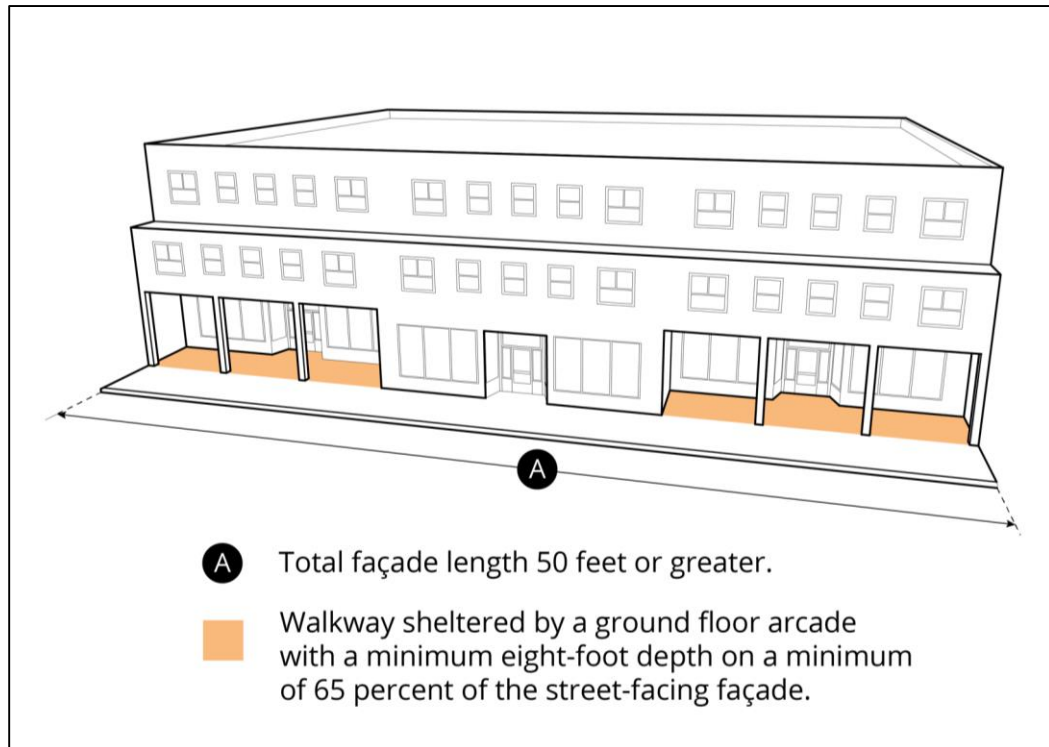


Figure B.1.1d (1)

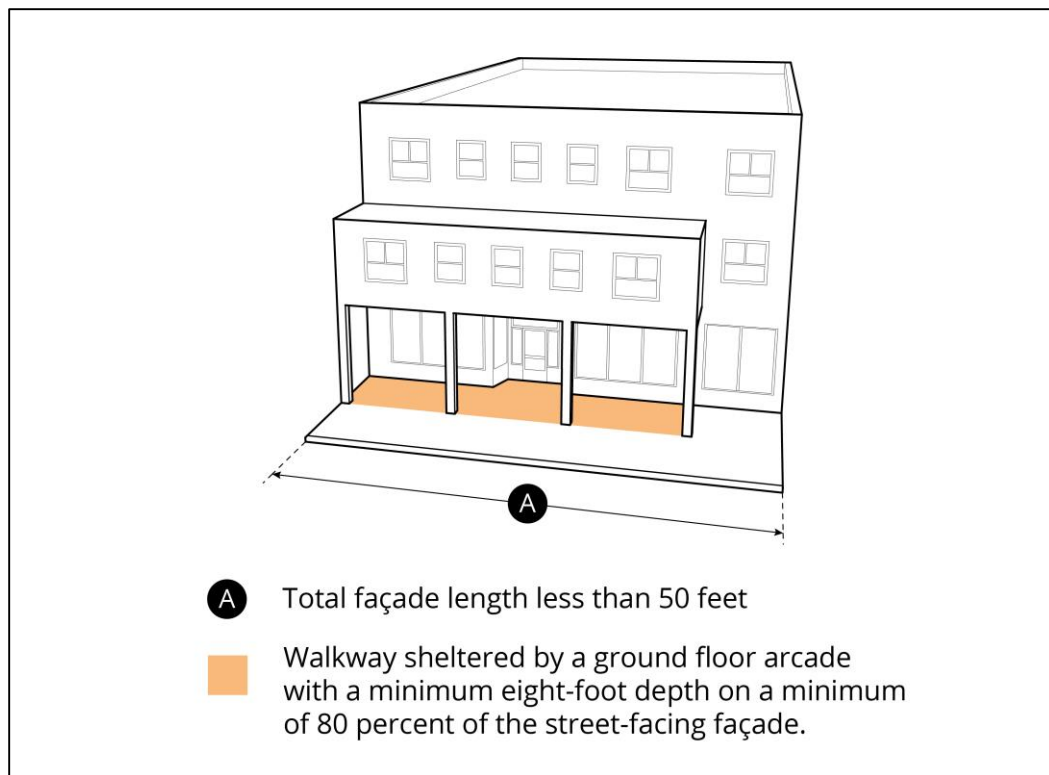


Figure B.1.1d (2)

- e. Ground floor open area abutting street-facing façade with a minimum area of 60 square feet; or



Figure B.1.1e

- f. Vertical elements, such as pilasters or columns, that protrude a minimum of one foot from the façade and extend the full height of the building base or ground floor, whichever is greater.

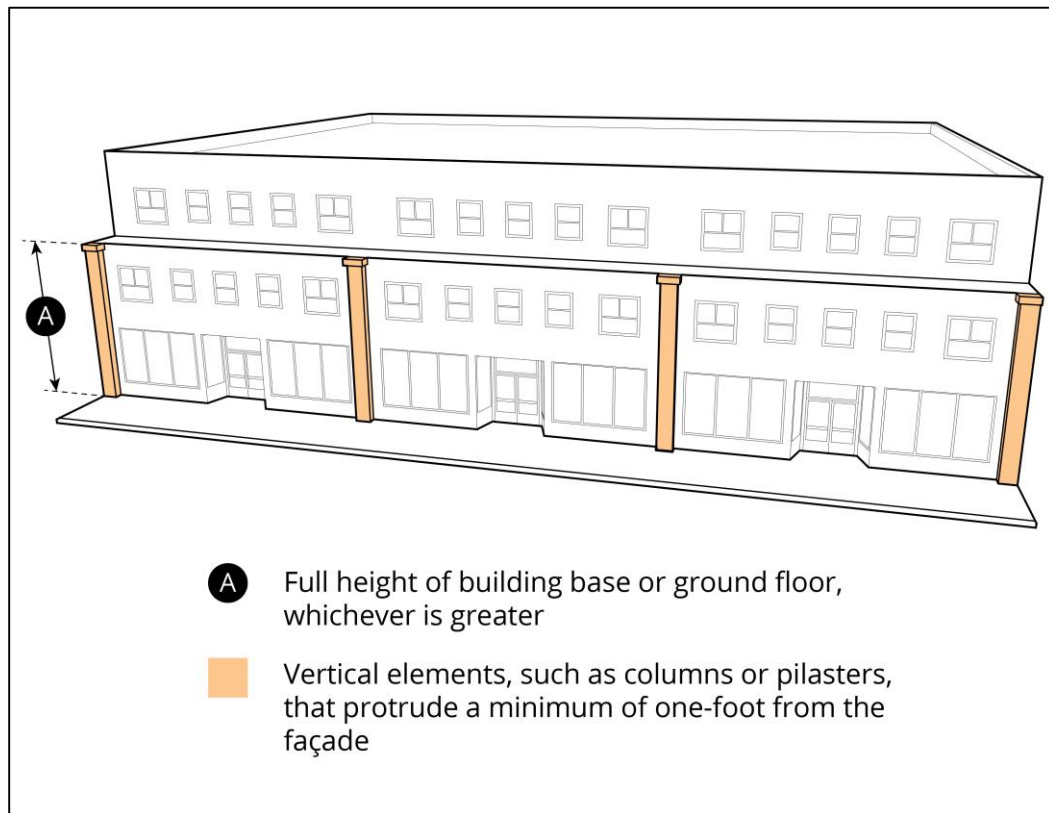


Figure B.1.1f

- 1.2 Upper floors above two stories shall be set back by a minimum of five feet from the ground-floor façade.
- 1.3 Townhomes or rowhouses shall have no more than six contiguous units in any single building.

B.2. Parking Structure Design

- 2.1 The ground-floor façade of a parking structure facing a street or pedestrian walkway shall be fenestrated on a minimum of 40 percent of the façade.
- 2.2 Façade openings on upper levels of a parking structure shall be screened at a minimum 10 percent and up to 30 percent of the opening to prevent full transparency into the structure.
- 2.3 Parking structures facing a street and greater than 40 feet in length shall include landscaping between the building façade and the street, or façade articulation of at least 25 percent of the façade length. The façade articulation shall be implemented by one of the following solutions:
 - a. An offset of the façade plane with a depth of at least 18 inches for a minimum of eight feet in horizontal length; or
 - b. A different building material covering the entire façade articulation.

B.3. Roof Design

- 3.1 At intervals of no more than 40 feet along the building façade, horizontal eaves shall be broken using at least one of the following strategies:
 - a. Gables;
 - b. Building projection with a depth of a minimum of two feet;
 - c. Change in façade or roof height of a minimum of two feet;
 - d. Change in roof pitch or form; or
 - e. Inclusion of dormers, parapets, and/or varying cornices.
- 3.2 Skylights shall have a flat profile rather than domed.

- 3.3 The total width of a single dormer or multiple dormers shall not exceed 50 percent of the total roof length at the street-facing façade. The dormer width shall be measured at dormer roof fascia, or widest part of the dormer.

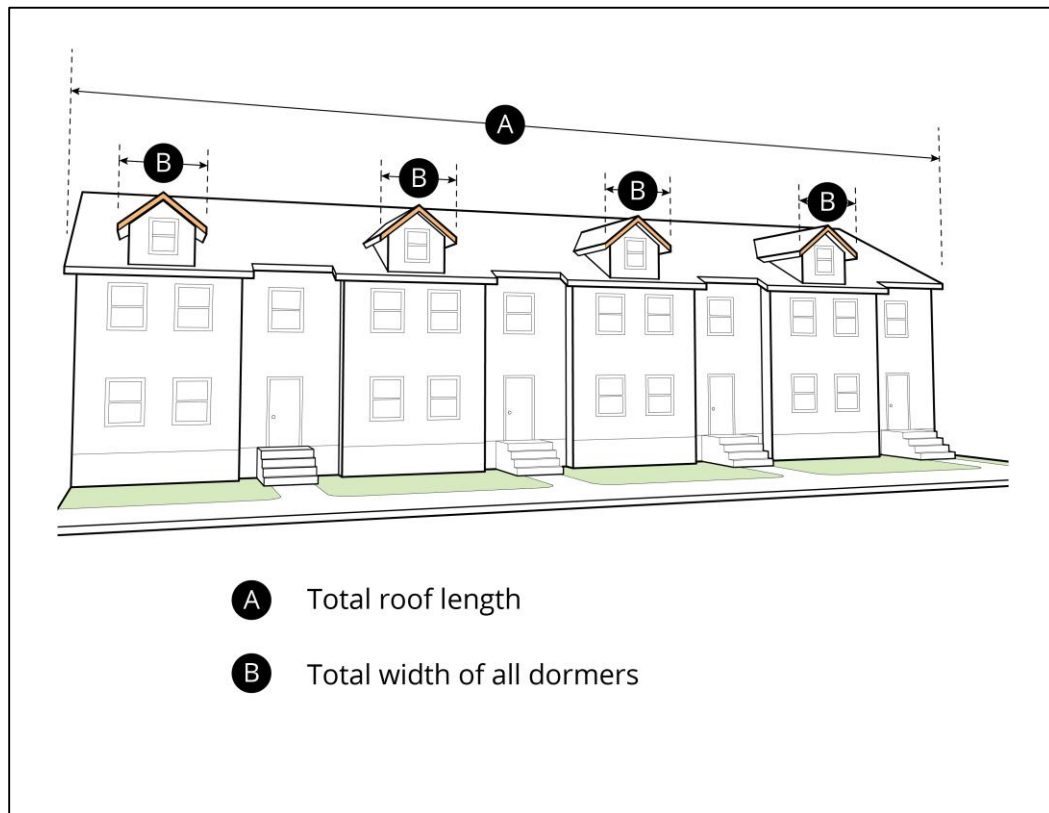


Figure B.3.3

- 3.4 Carport roof materials shall be the same as the primary building.

B.4. Façade Design and Articulation

- 4.1 Buildings greater than two stories shall be designed to differentiate the base, middle, and top of the building on any street-facing façade. Each of these elements shall be distinguished from one another using at least two of the following solutions:
- a. Variation in building mass for a minimum of 60 percent of the length of the street-facing façade through changes in the façade plane that protrude or recess with a minimum dimension of two feet;

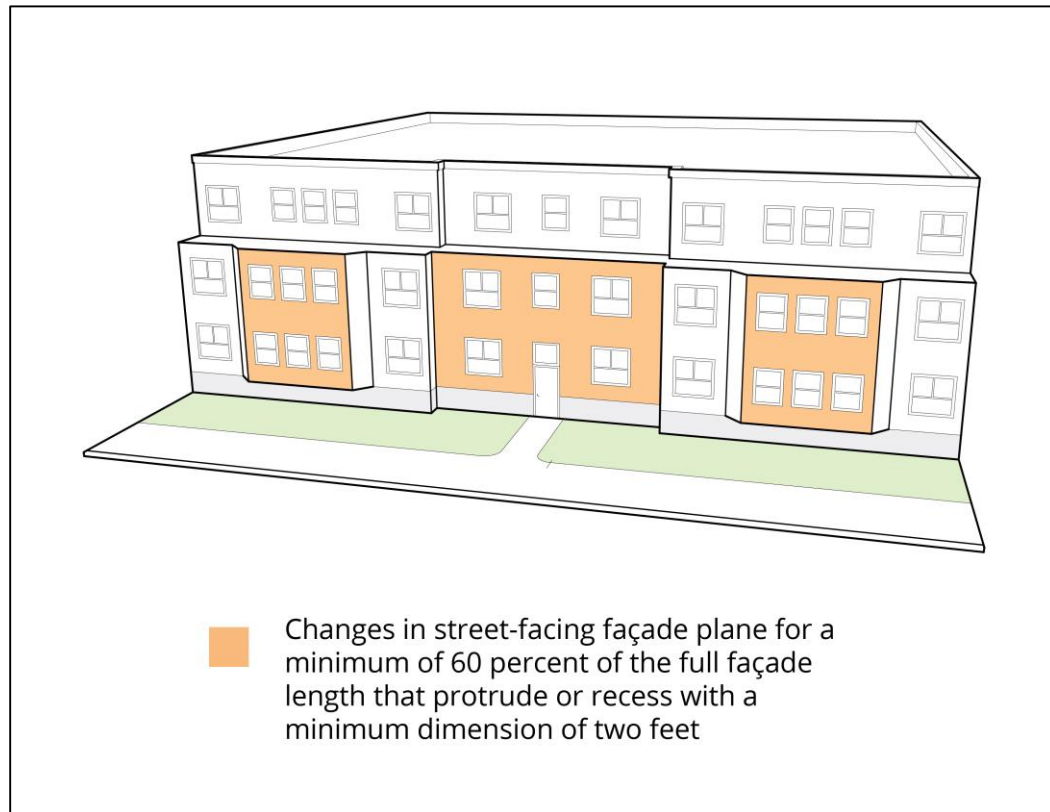


Figure B.4.1a

- b. Balconies or habitable projections with a minimum depth of two feet for a minimum of 20 percent length of the street-facing façade;

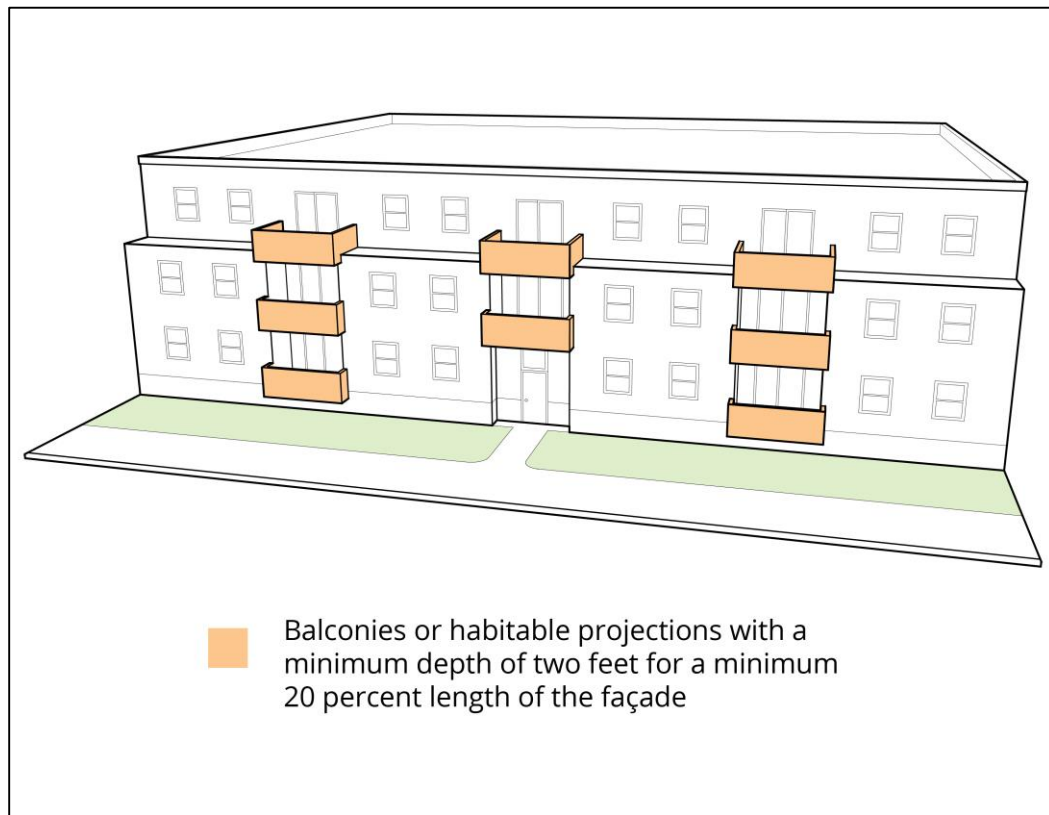


Figure B.4.1b

- c. Variation in façade articulation, using shade and weather protection components, projecting a minimum of three feet for a minimum of 20 percent length from the street-facing façade;

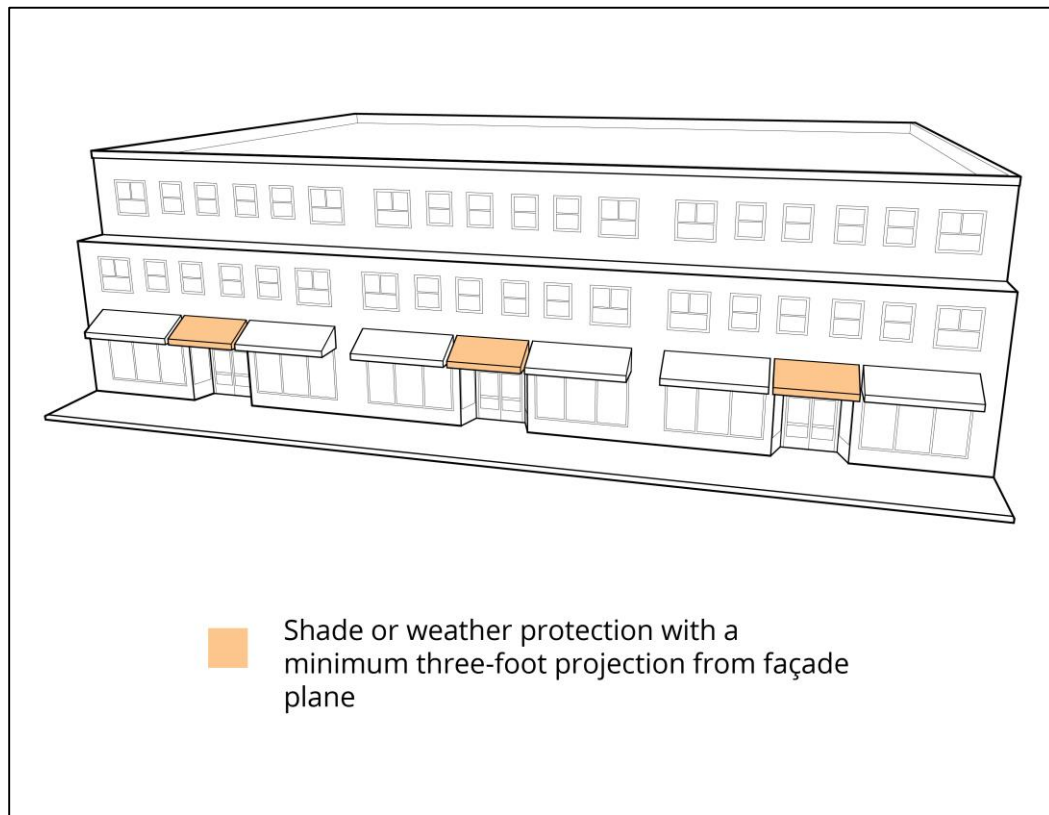


Figure B.4.1c

- d. The use of at least two different façade materials, each covering a minimum of 20 percent of the street-facing façade, or
- e. The upper floor shall implement a façade height that is a minimum of two feet greater than the façade height of the floor immediately below. The greater façade height shall be made evident by taller windows or arrangement of combined windows.

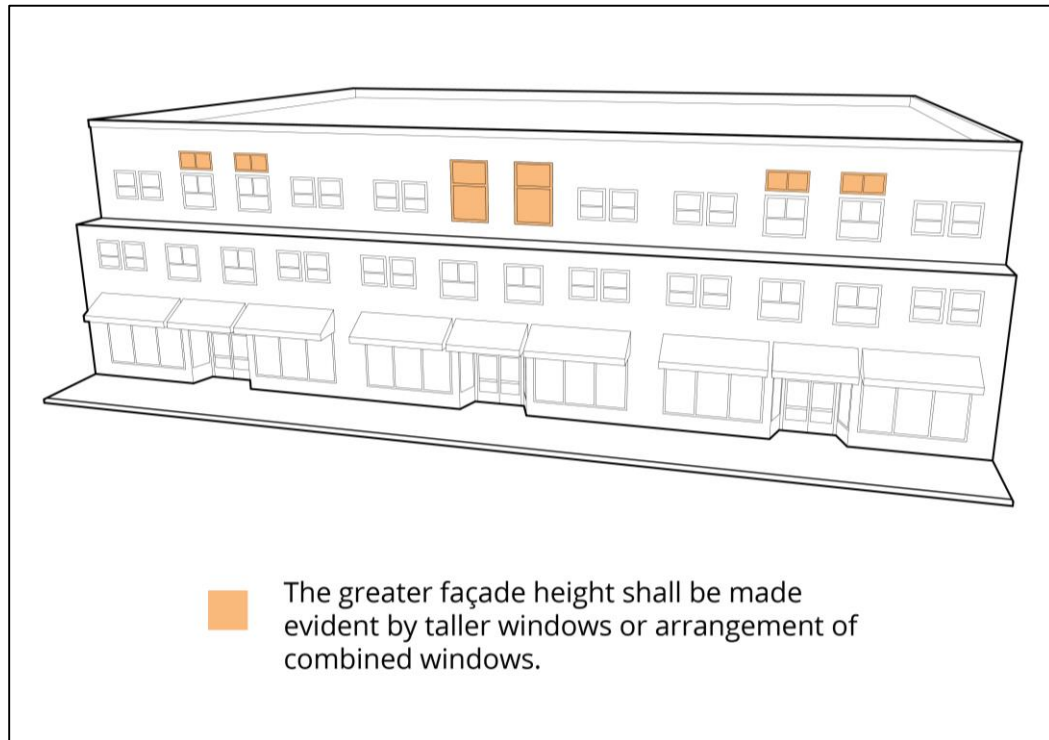


Figure B.4.1e

- 4.2 All façade materials, such as siding, window types, and architectural details, used on the street-facing façade shall be used on all other building façades.

- 4.3 Variation in the street-facing façade planes shall be provided for buildings greater than one story by incorporating any combination of the following architectural solutions to achieve a minimum of 16 points:
- Architectural features, such as:
 - Arcade or gallery along the ground floor; 8 points
 - Awnings or canopies on all ground floor windows of commercial space; 6 points
 - Building cornice; 5 points
 - Façade sconce lighting at a minimum of one light fixture per 15 linear feet. 3 points
 - Bay or box windows projecting a minimum of 18 inches from the façade plane and comprising a minimum of 20 percent of the fenestration on the upper floors of the facade; 6 points
 - Balconies or Juliet balconies provided on a minimum of 40 percent of the fenestration on the upper floors of the facade; 5 points
 - Landscaped trellises or lattices extending across a minimum of 65 percent of any level of the facade; 5 points
 - Materials and color changes; 3 points
 - Eaves that overhang a minimum of two feet from the facade with supporting brackets; 3 points
 - Window boxes or plant shelves under a minimum of 60 percent of the fenestration on the upper floors of the facade; or 3 points
 - Decorative elements such as molding, brackets, or corbels. 3 points
- 4.4 Garage doors shall be recessed a minimum of 12 inches from the façade plane and along the street-facing façade shall not exceed 40 percent of the length of the building façade.

- 4.5 Changes in building materials shall occur at inside corners.

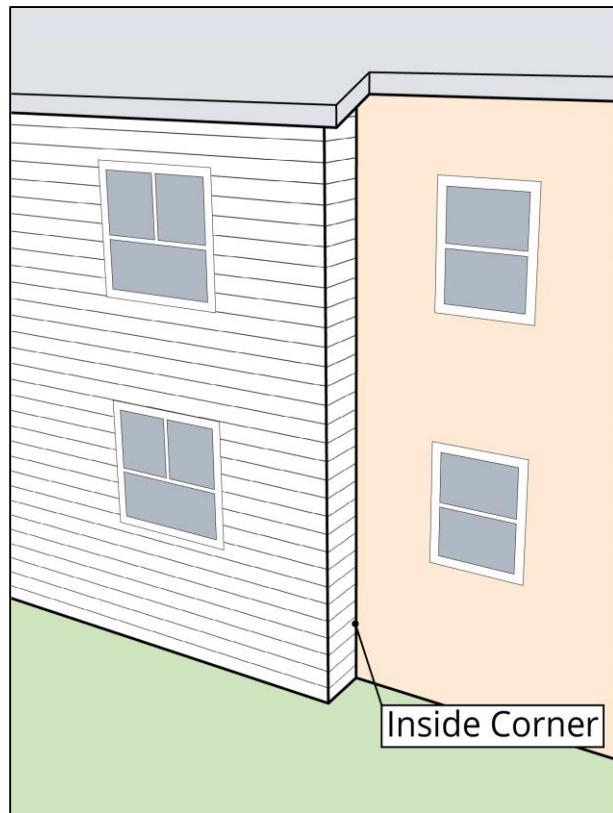


Figure B.4.5

- 4.6 A primary building entrance shall be provided facing a street or community recreation space. Additionally, all development shall meet the following requirements:
- a. Pedestrian entries to ground-floor and upper-floor non-residential uses shall meet at least one of the following standards:
 - i. The entrance shall be recessed in the façade plane at least three feet in depth; or
 - ii. The entrance shall be covered by an awning, portico, or other architectural element projecting from the façade a minimum of three feet.

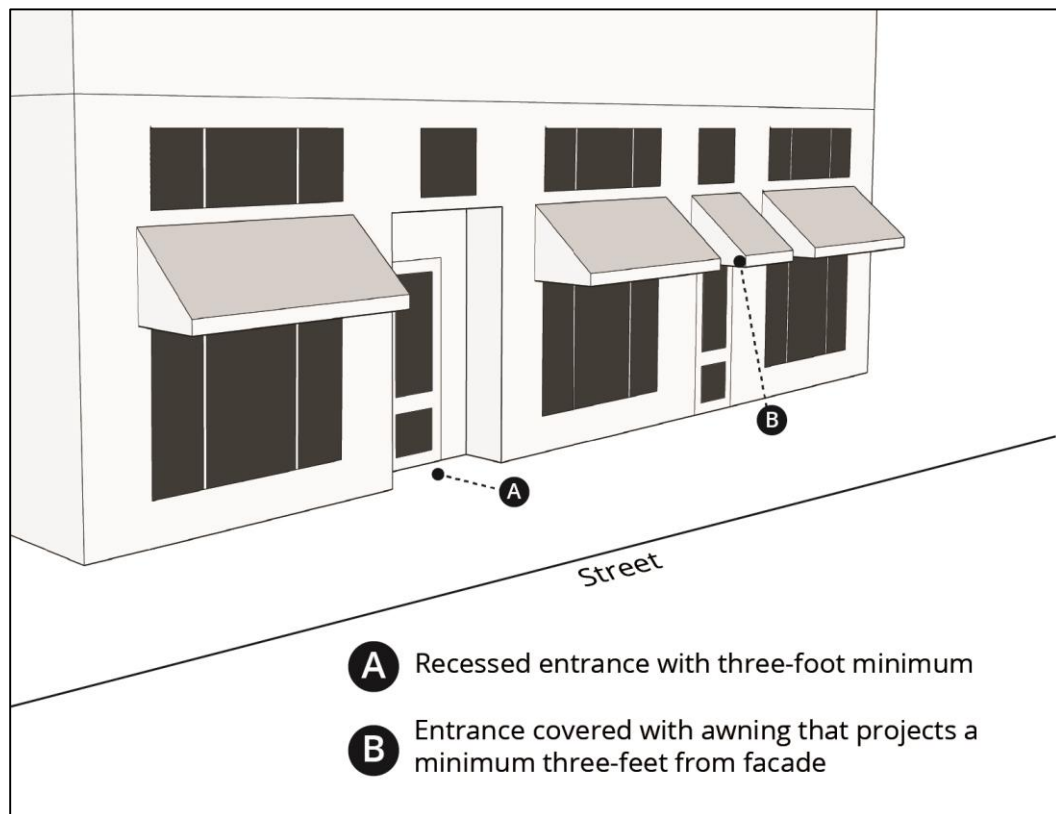


Figure B.4.6a

- b. For ground-floor commercial uses, façades facing a street shall include windows, doors, or openings for at least 60 percent of the building façade that is between two and 10 feet above the level of the sidewalk.

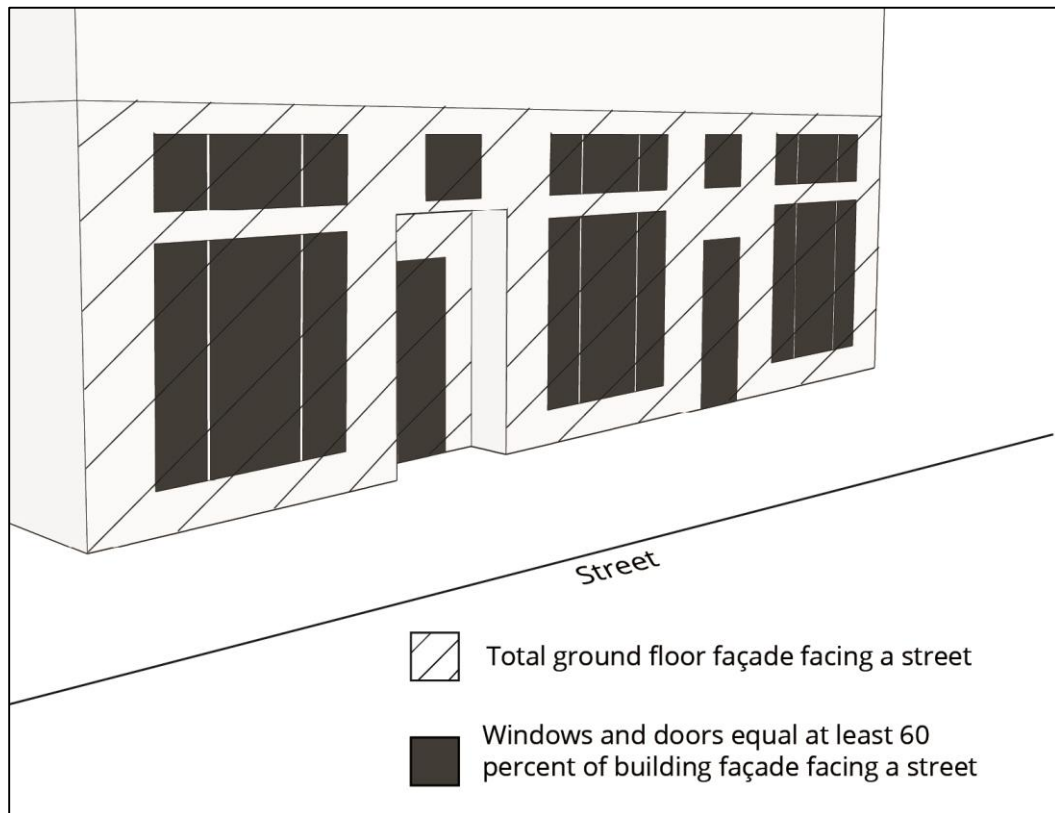


Figure B.4.6b

- 4.7 Pedestrian entries to buildings shall meet minimum dimensions to ensure adequate access based on use and development intensity. Building entries inclusive of the doorway and the facade plane shall meet the following minimum dimensions:
 - a. Individual residential entries: five feet in width
 - b. Single entry to multiple residential unit building, including Residential Mixed-Use buildings: eight feet in width
 - c. Storefront entry: six feet in width

- 4.8 Mirrored windows are prohibited.
- 4.9 Awnings shall be subject to the following requirements:
 - a. A minimum vertical clearance of eight feet measured from the pedestrian pathway;
 - b. Shall not extend beyond individual storefront bays; and
 - c. Shall not be patterned or striped.
- 4.10 For buildings abutting a single-family zoning district or existing single-family use, no part of a rooftop or upper floor terrace or deck shall be closer than five feet from the facade plane of the lower floor, to prevent views into adjacent residential uses.
- 4.11 Balconies are allowed on facades facing the street and those facades facing existing non-residential uses on abutting parcels. Such balconies shall be without any projections beyond the building footprint.
- 4.12 Residential Mixed-Use buildings shall provide at least one of the following features along street-facing façades where the façade exceeds 50 feet in length:
 - a. A minimum five-foot offset from the façade plane for a length of at least 10 feet;
 - b. Multiple pilasters or columns, each with a minimum width of two feet; or
 - c. Common open space, such as a plaza, outdoor dining area, or other spaces.
- 4.13 Continuous blank façades on any floor level shall not exceed 25 percent of the entire façade length along any street.

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