

LWC

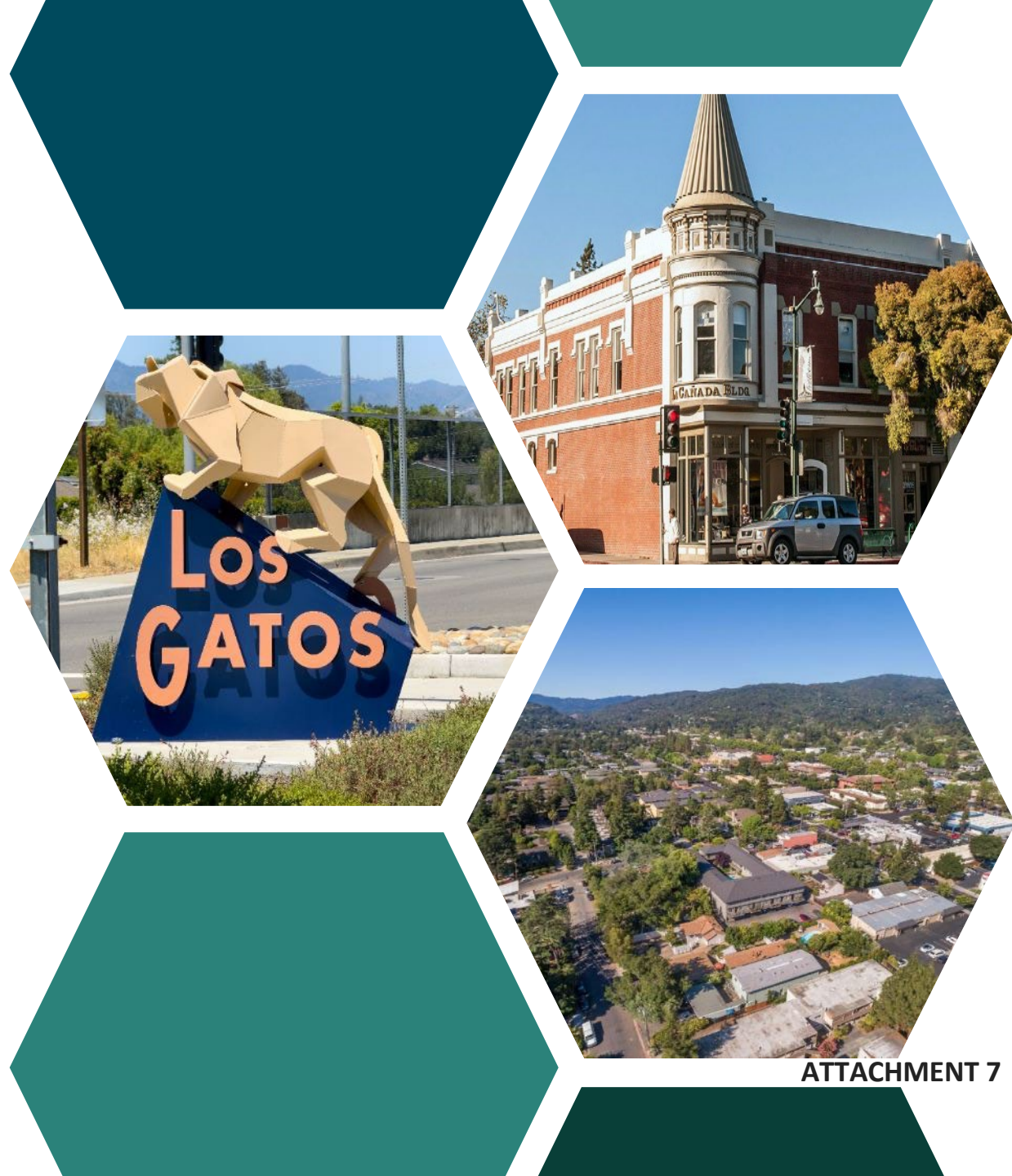
Town of Los Gatos
**Multi-Family and Mixed-
Use Objective Design
Standards Update**

Town Council Hearing

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

7:00 p.m.

Los Gatos Town Hall



Introductions

Town Staff

- **Joel Paulson**, Community Development Director
- **Sean Mullin**, Planning Manager

Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. (LWC)

- **Monica Szydlik**, AICP, Senior Associate
- **Cal Kurtz**, AIA, Lead Associate
- **Po Johnson**, Associate

Project Objectives

- Update the Town's existing **2023 Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Residential Development** by refining design standards to respond to Town Council and community feedback and priorities.
- Implement the Town's General Plan goals
- Ensure compliance with State law (SB 330)
- Focus on:
 - ✓ High-Quality Building Design
 - ✓ Height Transitions
 - ✓ Architectural Character and Details
 - ✓ Small-scale Multi-family Buildings

What are Objective Standards?

- Involve **no personal or subjective judgement** by a public official and are uniformly **verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark** or criterion available and **knowable by both the development applicant and public official** prior to submittal.

Subjective

Development must be compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Objective

Blank walls (without doors and windows) of more than 20 linear feet are prohibited along any street-facing elevation.

- **Set clear expectations for approval.**
- **Streamline the review process.**

Project Process and Schedule



Documents:

- Zoning Code development standards
- 2040 General Plan relevant policy direction
- North 40 Specific Plan
- Record of community and Council input
- Staff input and issues
- Analysis of example projects

Project Process and Schedule



- *Residents, architects, developers*
- *Discussed:*
 - *Existing ODS*
 - *The architectural character of Los Gatos and*
 - *Recommendations for the updated ODS*

Project Process and Schedule



Draws on findings from:

- *Site Analysis and Evaluation Memo*
- *Focus Groups*
- *Staff input*

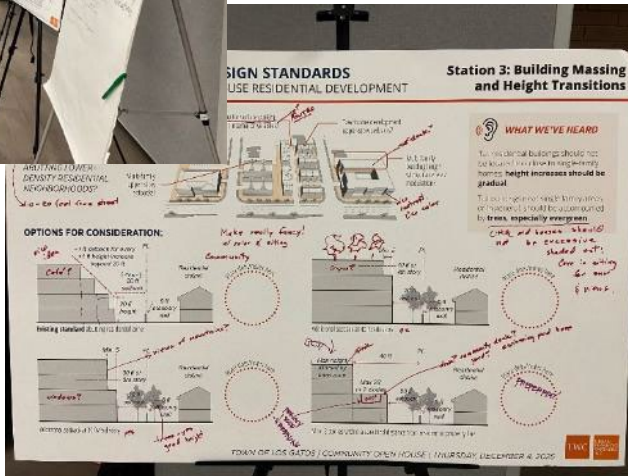
Project Process and Schedule

2025

2026



- Focus on:
 - Building placement
 - Design of street-facing setbacks and site perimeter
 - Building massing and articulation
 - Roof types and details
 - Height transitions
 - Window design and entrance design
 - Building materials and colors
 - Architectural character



Project Process and Schedule



March 27 Joint PC/TC Study Session:

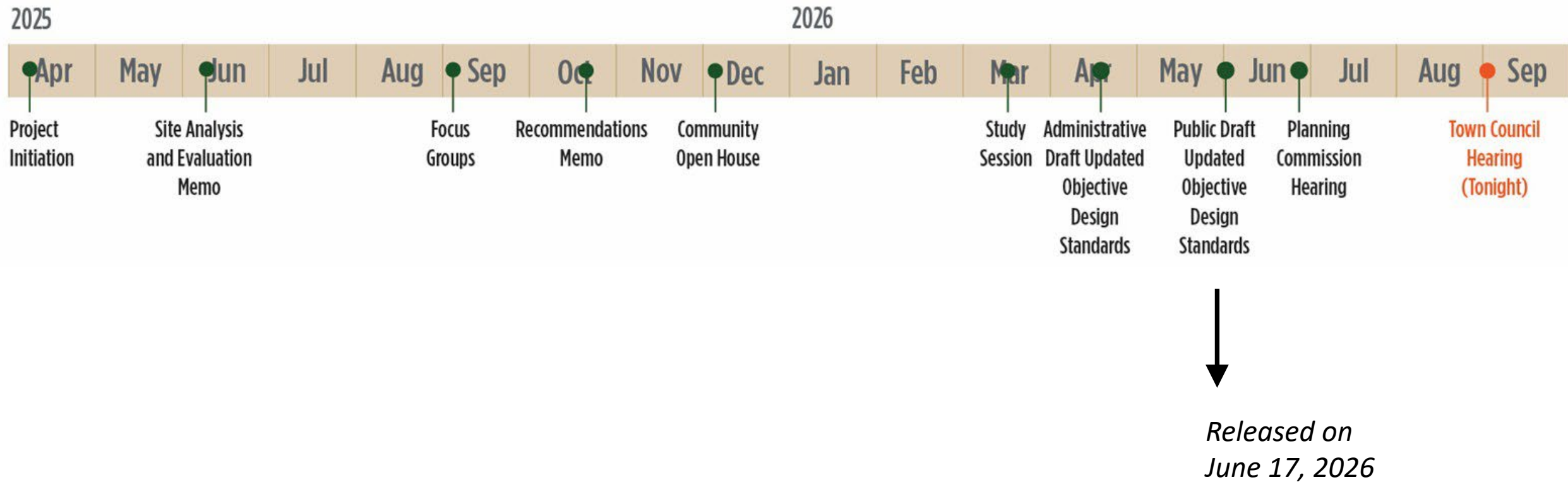
- Reviewed working design ideas informed by input from all outreach
- Gathered PC feedback on specific questions

Project Process and Schedule



- *Submitted to Staff for review; received comments and discussed with Staff*

Project Process and Schedule



Project Process and Schedule



June 24 PC Hearing:

- *Reviewed Public Draft*
- *Gathered PC feedback*

Source of Updates

- **Community Design Workshop**, part of the 2040 General Update (2020):
 - Consider upper-story step-backs
 - Require high-quality materials
 - Achieve balanced facades
- **ODS Community Meeting** (2022):
 - Consider shade, weather protection
 - Support diverse roof types
- **Town Council Meeting** (2024):
 - Height transitions/massing
 - Architectural style that reflects existing character
 - High-quality design that reflects existing character
 - Standards for an array of building types and sizes, including small multi-family

Source of Updates, Cont'd

- **Staff list of changes** needed (spring 2025)
- **Focus Groups** (September 2025):
 - Support diverse architectural styles
 - Height transitions adjacent to single-family residential
- **Open House** (December 2025):
 - Preference for more articulation
 - Focus on single-family residential privacy
 - Consider projections/recesses for entries
 - Mix of quality building materials
- **Joint TC/PC Study Session** (March 2025):
 - Preference for reduced height within 40 ft of a single-family district
 - Consider requiring community space/common buildings
 - Prevent excessive/chaotic material changes and articulation

Source of Updates, Cont'd

- **Planning Commission Hearing (June 24, 2026):**
 - Add definition for “townhomes,” consistent with the definition used in the Code
 - Modify the calculation of bicycle parking requirements for non-residential components to be based off square footage rather than vehicle parking requirements
 - Added solid fencing as a screening option for surface parking lots
 - Require rooftop mechanical equipment screening be durable materials, consistent with the exterior of the building
 - Text and graphic edits for legibility, consistency, and to clarify intent of select standards

Updates

Section A: Site Standards

A.1 Pedestrian Access

A.2 Short-Term Bicycle Parking

A.3 Long-Term Bicycle Parking

A.4 Vehicular Access

A.5 Surface Parking Location and Design

A.6 Parking Structure Access

A.7 Utilities

A.8 Landscaping and Screening

A.9 Fencing

A.10 Retaining Walls

A.11 Landscaped, Private, and Community
Recreation Spaces

A.12 Building Placement

Minor edits

More substantive edits

Section B: Building Standards

B.1 Building Massing and Scale

B.2 Parking Structure Design

B.3 Roof Design

B.4 Façade Design and Articulation

B.5 Entrance Design and Ground Floor Design

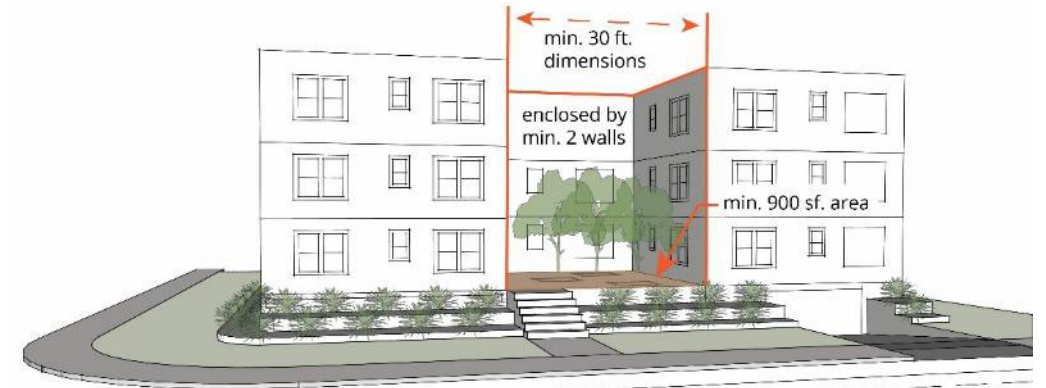
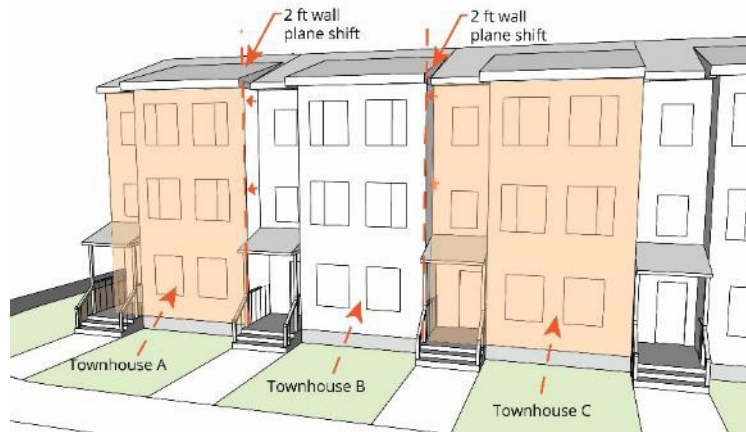
B.6 Windows and Doors

B.7 Materials and Architectural Details

New sections

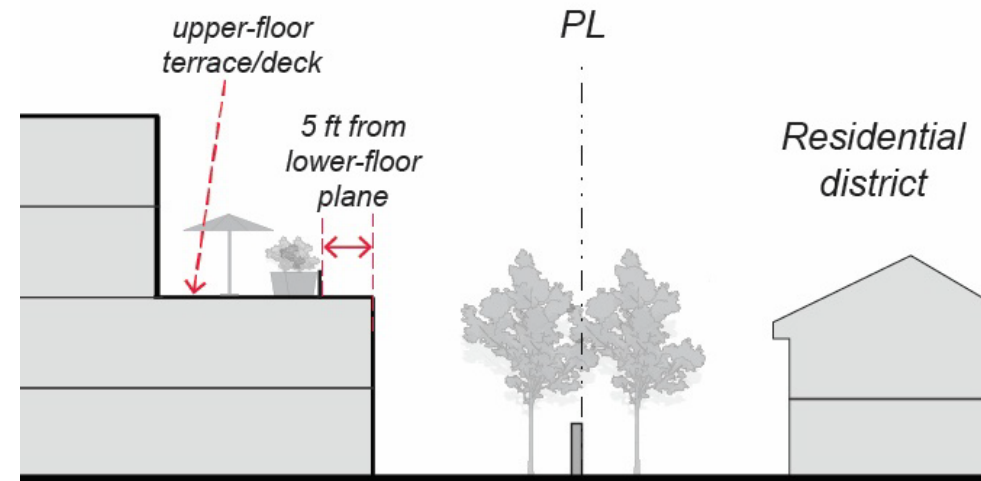
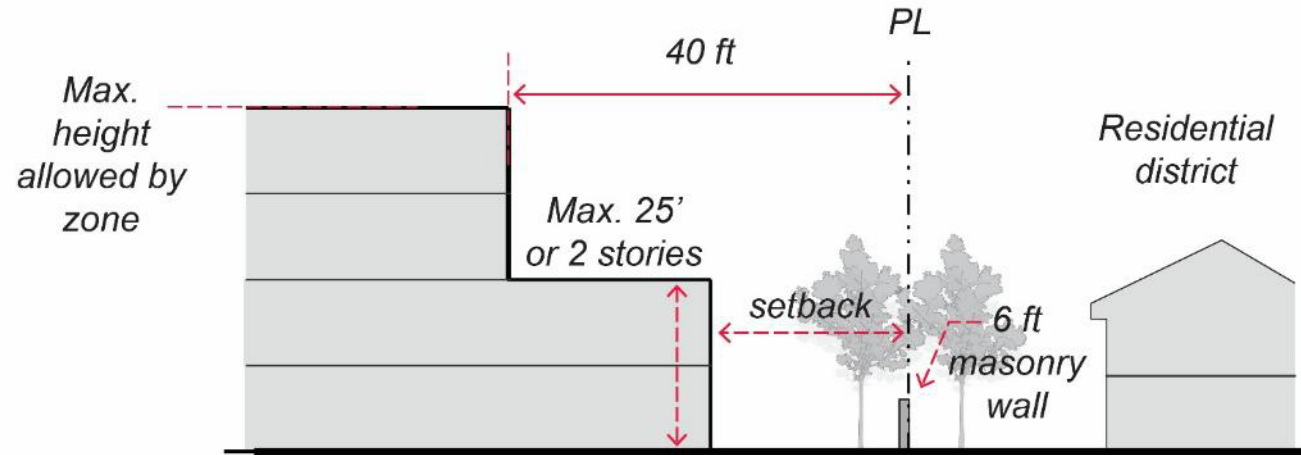
Building Massing Options

- Must choose at least one of the following: →
 - 40% of upper-story stepped back
 - Ground/podium-level community recreation space enclosed by walls
 - Maximum 65 ft building frontage
- Townhomes must provide a wall plane shift between units



Adjacency to Single-Family Districts

- Reduced height (25 ft/2 stories) when within 40 ft of a single-family district
- 5 ft step-back for upper-floor terraces/decks



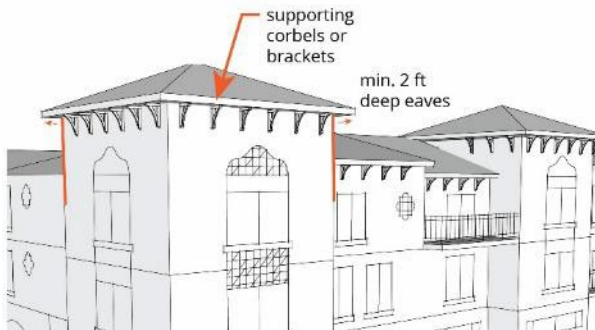
Architectural Articulation

- Differentiate base, middle, and top with at least two of the following:

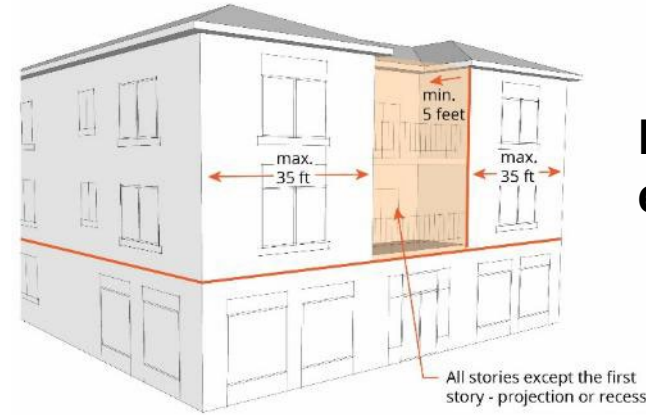


Material change between first and upper floors along a min. 70% of all street-facing elevations

Material change between first and upper floors

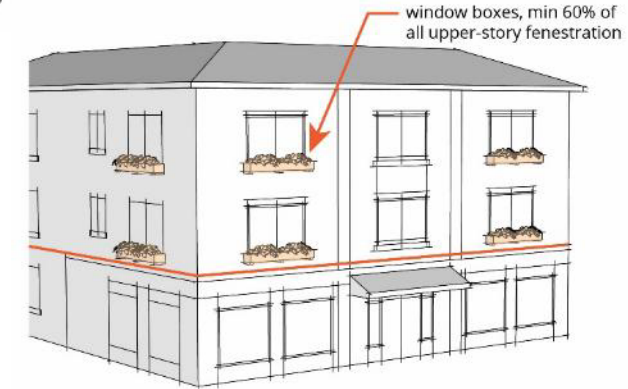


Eaves with corbels/brackets



Recesses or projections every 35 ft

Window boxes



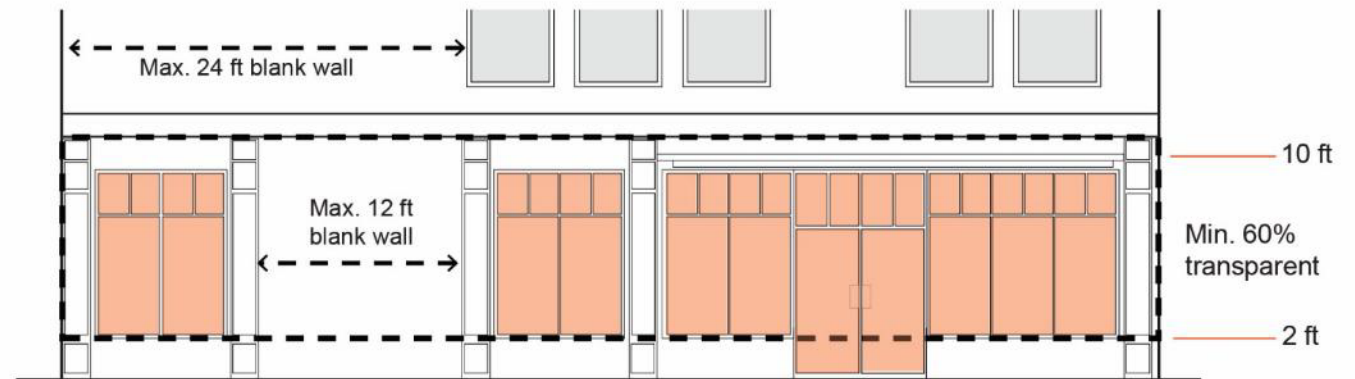
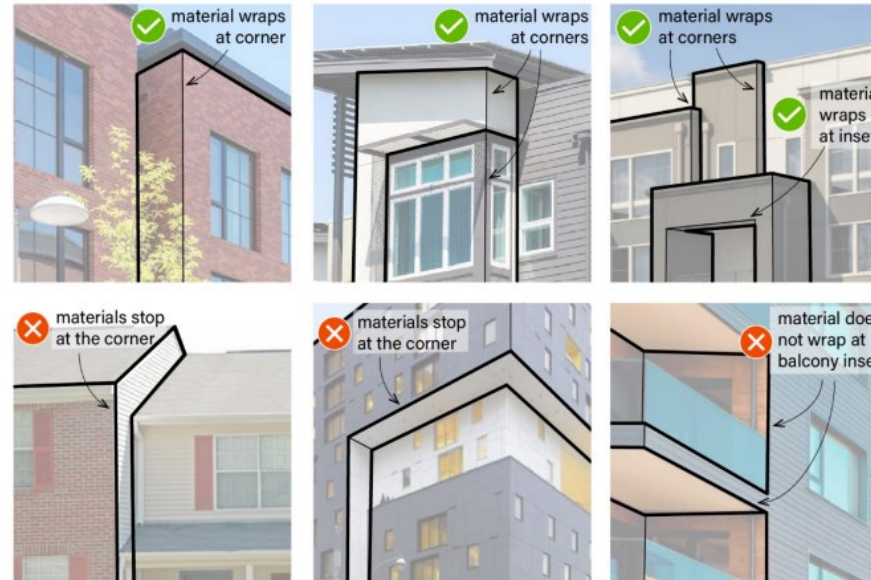
For all stories except the first story, street-facing balconies or habitable projections



Balconies or habitable projections on street-facing elevations

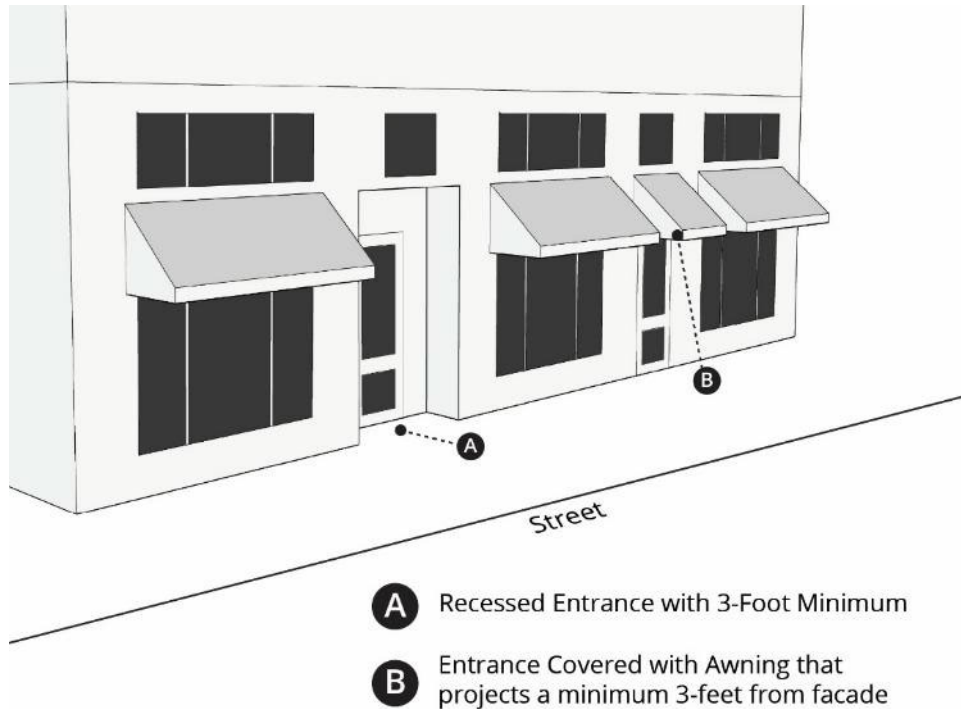
Architectural Articulation

- 360-degree design
 - All materials/details must be incorporated on all building elevations
 - Material changes must occur at inside corners
- Break up blank facades with windows or doors
 - Upper floors: max. 24 ft without a window or door
 - Ground floor: max. 12 ft without a window or door



Entrance Design

- Residential and non-residential entries must be under a roof supported by columns or a recess
- Must be framed by architectural elements



High Quality Design

- Windows

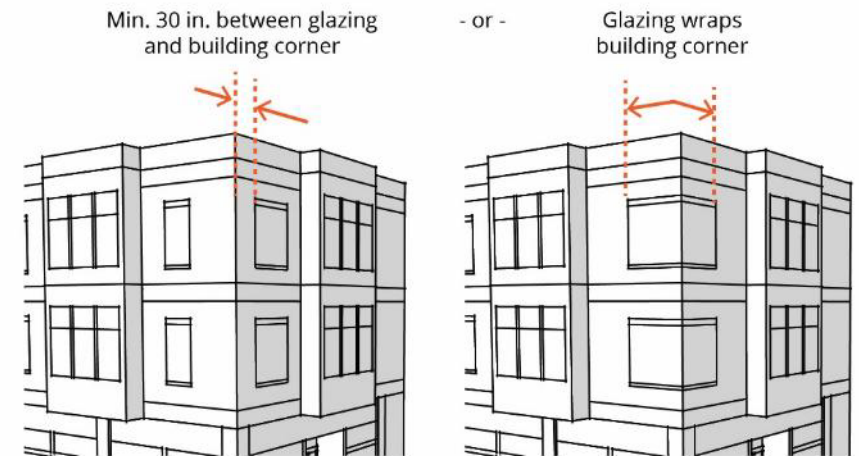
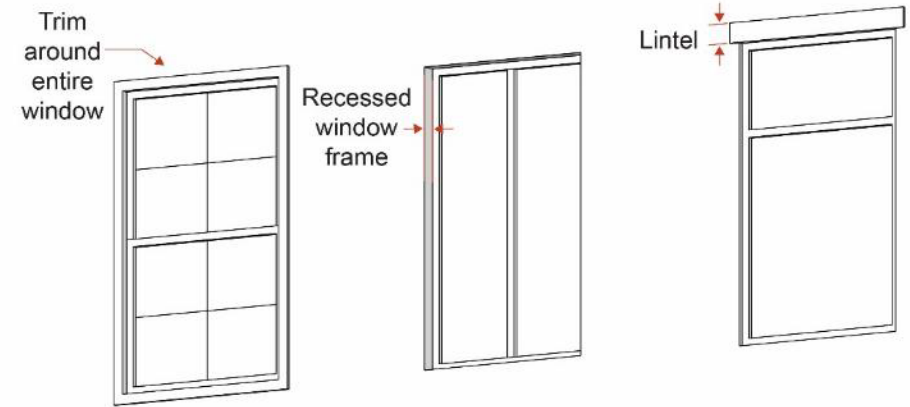
- Break up large window panes
- Require trim, recesses, or lintels
- Glazing wraps or is min. 30in from corner

- Materials

- Primary (max 50%), secondary (max 45%), accent (max 25%)
- All materials must be fire resistant, protected from corrosion, and have a lifespan of at least 30 years

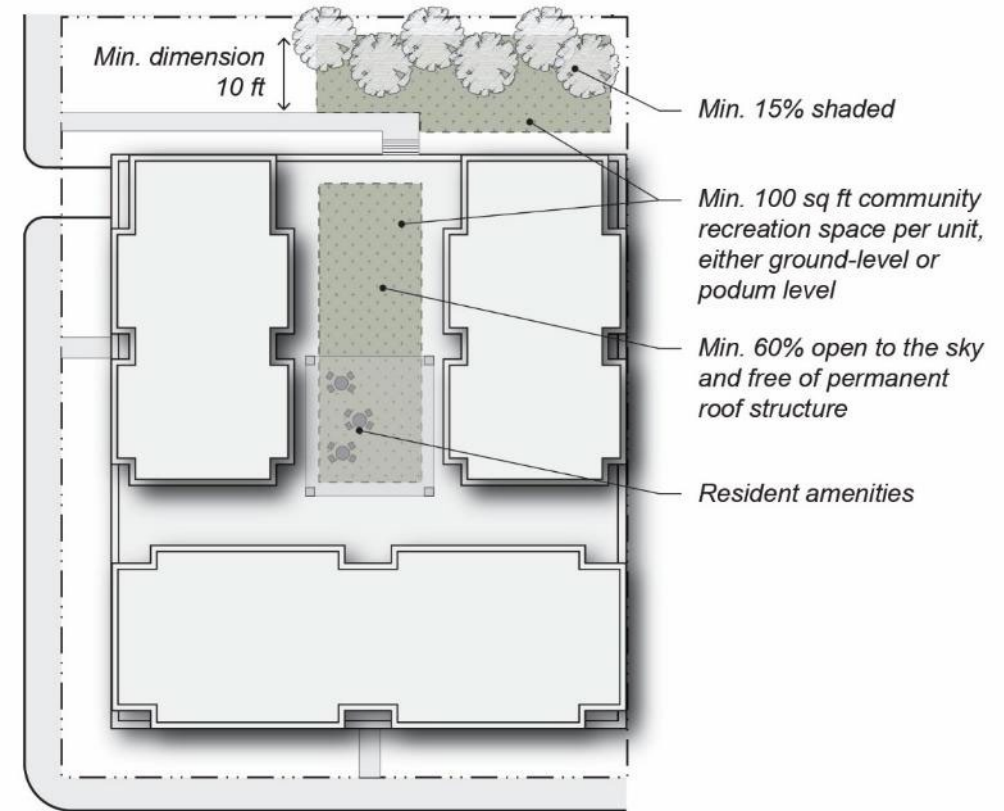
- Roofs

- Require eaves and overhangs
- Gable, projection, change in height, dormer, parapet, or cornice every 75 ft



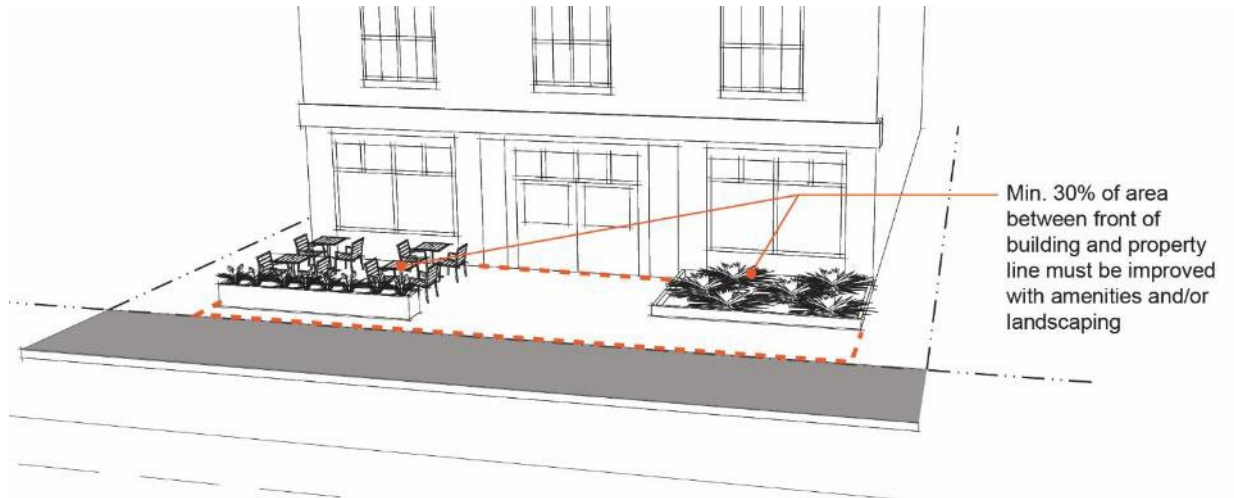
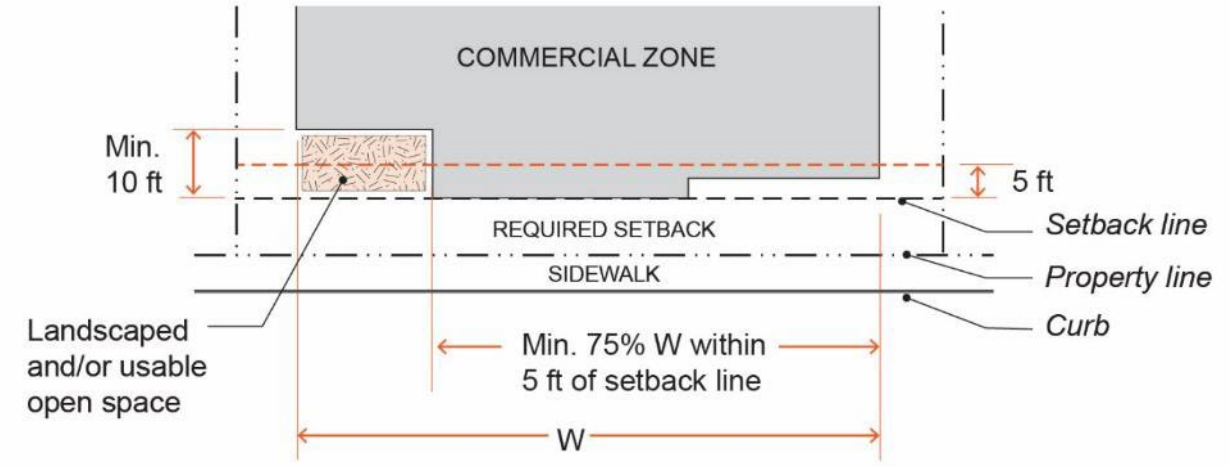
Landscaped and Recreation Space

- Landscaped Space: 20% of site
- Private Recreation Space: 60 sq ft per unit, 6 ft in any horizontal direction
- Community Recreation Space:
 - 100 sq ft per unit (developments with >8 units)
 - 60% open to sky, 15% shaded
 - ≤50% may be on a rooftop
 - Community recreation/multi-purpose room required for all buildings with 50+ units
- 40% of upper-story step-backs must be open space and stepped back for neighbors' privacy



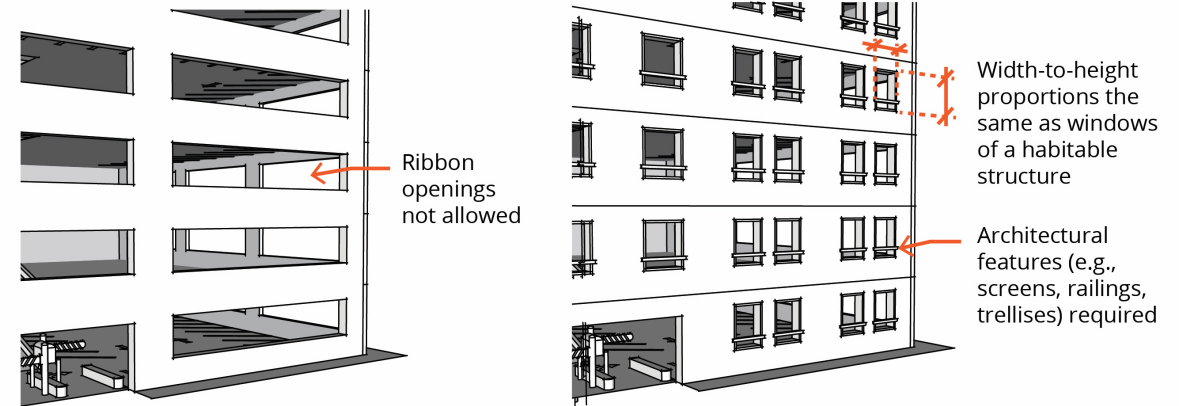
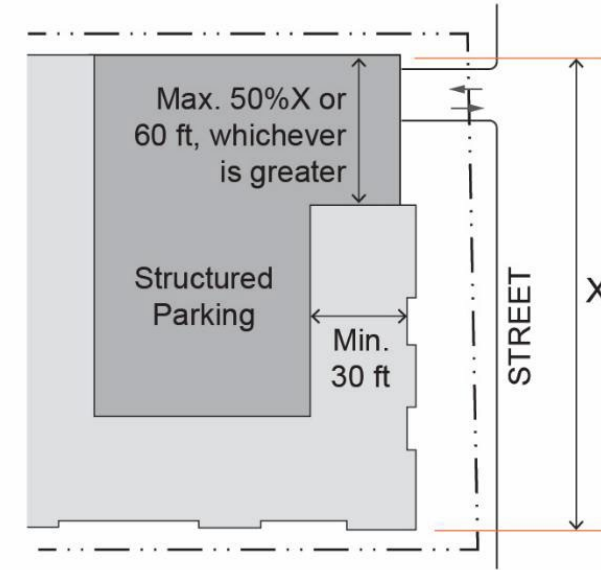
Building Placement

- 75% of frontage within 5 ft of the setback line
- Remaining space must be at least 10 ft deep and usable
- Ground-floor non-residential uses must include site amenities/landscaping on min. 30% of area between the building and the street-facing property line
- Multi-family residential primary entrances must face a public right-of-way or a community open space



Vehicle/Bicycle Parking/Access

- Vehicle/bicycle parking and access
 - Updated bicycle parking consistent with CalGreen
 - Max. 1 curb cut per 100 ft of frontage
- Above-ground parking structures
 - Wrapped with 30 ft-deep ground floor non-residential
 - Visibility limited to 50% street-facing facade/60 ft
 - Punched openings required; no ribbon openings
 - Required architectural features: cut metal screens, railings, trellises, vertical plantings, louvers, or decorative security grills



Thank you!