

**TOWN OF LOS GATOS**  
**DRAFT OBJECTIVE STANDARDS**  
**June 22, 2022**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Objective Design Standards is to ensure that new qualifying multi-family and mixed-use projects in Los Gatos provide high-quality architecture, integrate with surrounding development, and include well-designed amenities and open spaces 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.

**ORGANIZATION AND APPLICABILITY**

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

Qualifying multi-family and mixed-use projects must also comply with all existing development requirements in the Town Code, including but not limited to building code requirements, existing Town standards, adopted specific plans, and development standards such as height and setbacks. If there is any conflict between these standards and those in another adopted document, the more restrictive standard shall apply.

## A. SITE STANDARDS

### A.1. Pedestrian Access

- 1.1 All on-site buildings, entries, facilities, amenities, and parking areas shall be internally connected with pedestrian pathways and may include use of the public sidewalk. Pedestrian pathways shall connect to the public sidewalk along each street.
- 1.2 Pedestrian walkways 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.

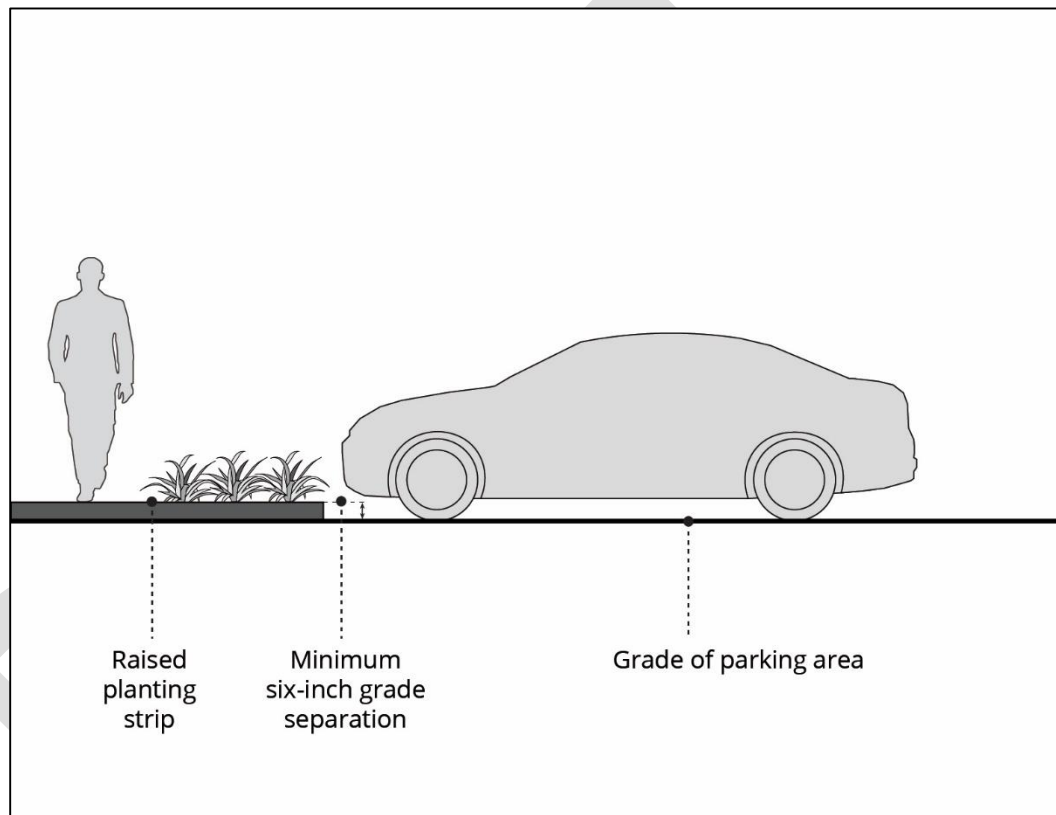
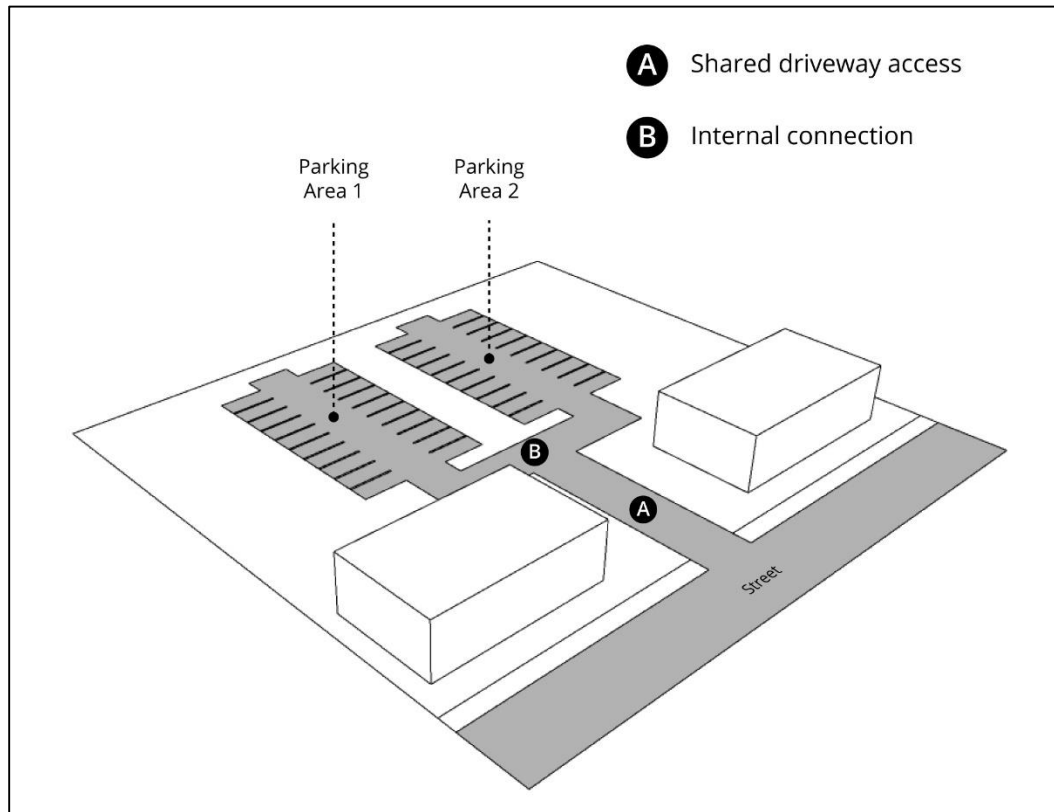


Figure A.1.2

## **A.2. Vehicular Access**

- 2.1 Off-street parking shall have internal vehicular circulation that precludes the use of a street for aisle-to-aisle circulation.

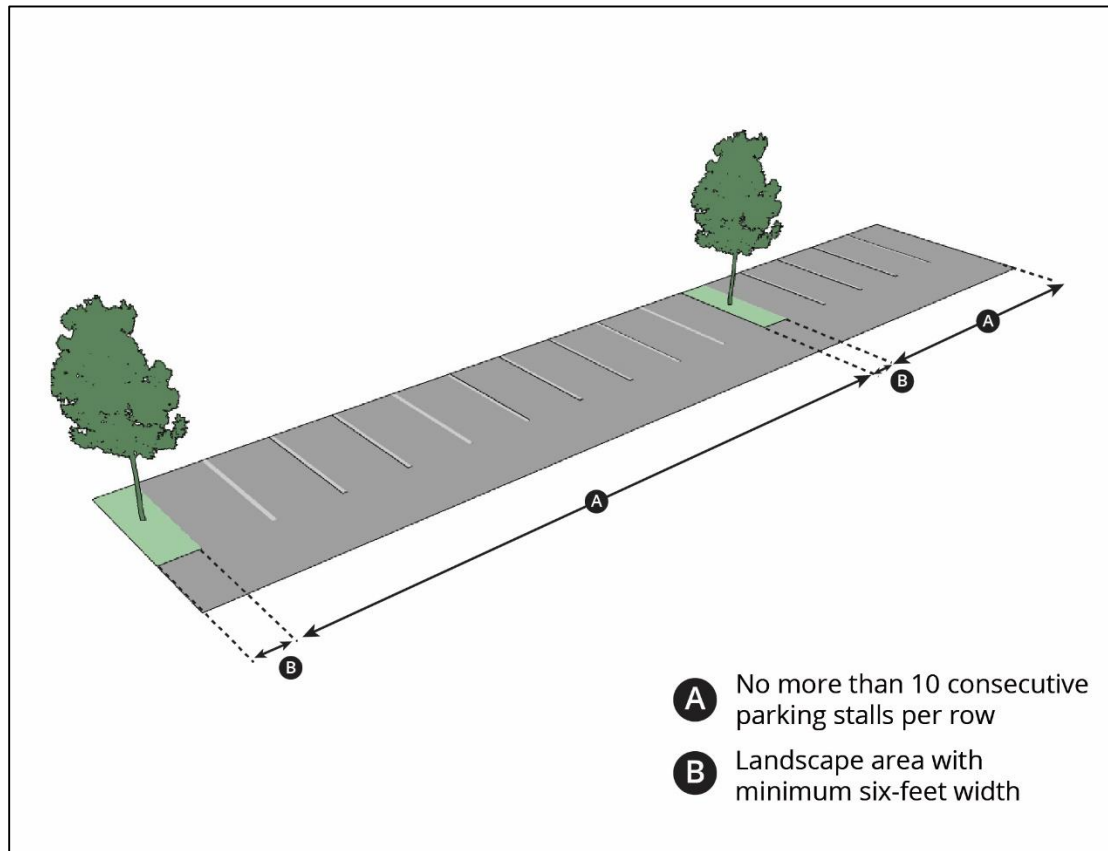


**Figure A.2.1**

## **A.3. Parking Location and Design**

- 3.1 Driveways and surface parking lots shall not be located between the building frontage and the street.
- 3.2 Multiple parking areas located on a common property shall be internally connected and shall use shared driveways to access the street.

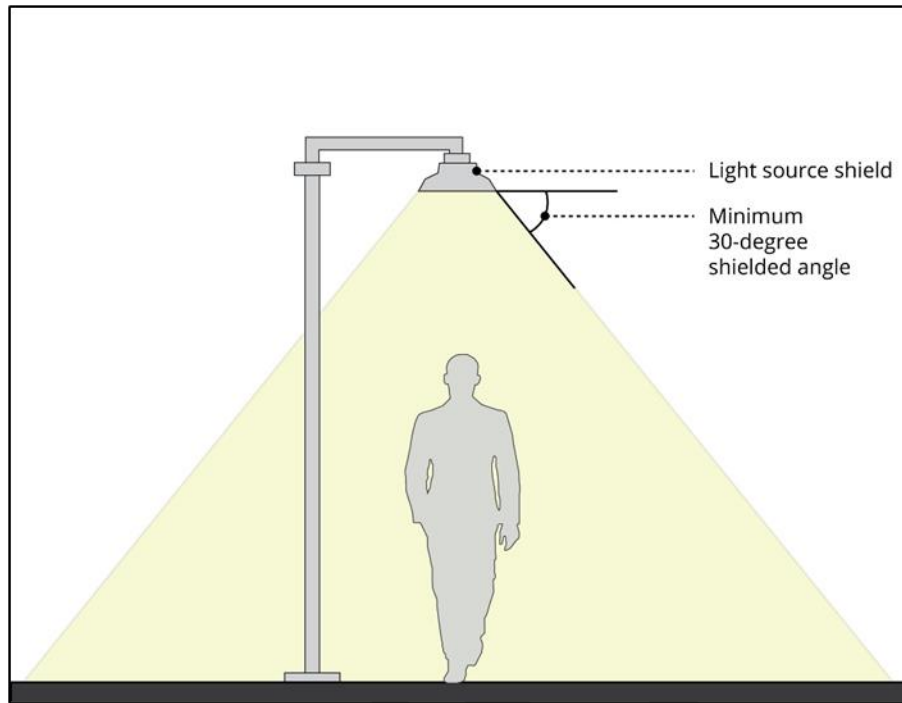
- 3.3 Uncovered parking rows with at least 15 consecutive parking spaces shall include a landscape area of six feet minimum width at intervals of no more than 10 consecutive parking stalls. One tree shall be provided in each landscape area.



**Figure A.3.3**

- 3.4 Carports shall not be located between a building and a street.
- A.4. Parking Structure Access**
- 4.1 Any automobile entry gate to a parking structure shall be located to allow a minimum of 25 feet between the gate and the back of the sidewalk to minimize conflicts between sidewalks and vehicle queuing.
- 4.2 A parking structure shall not occupy more than 50 percent of the building width of any street-facing façade and shall be recessed a minimum five feet from street-facing façades of the building.
- A.5. Utilities**
- 5.1 Pedestrian-oriented lighting shall be provided along all pedestrian paths. Exterior lighting fixtures shall be a minimum of three feet and a maximum of 15 feet in height.

- 5.2 Exterior lighting shall be fully shielded and restrain light to a minimum 30 degrees below the horizontal plane of the light source. Uplighting is prohibited.



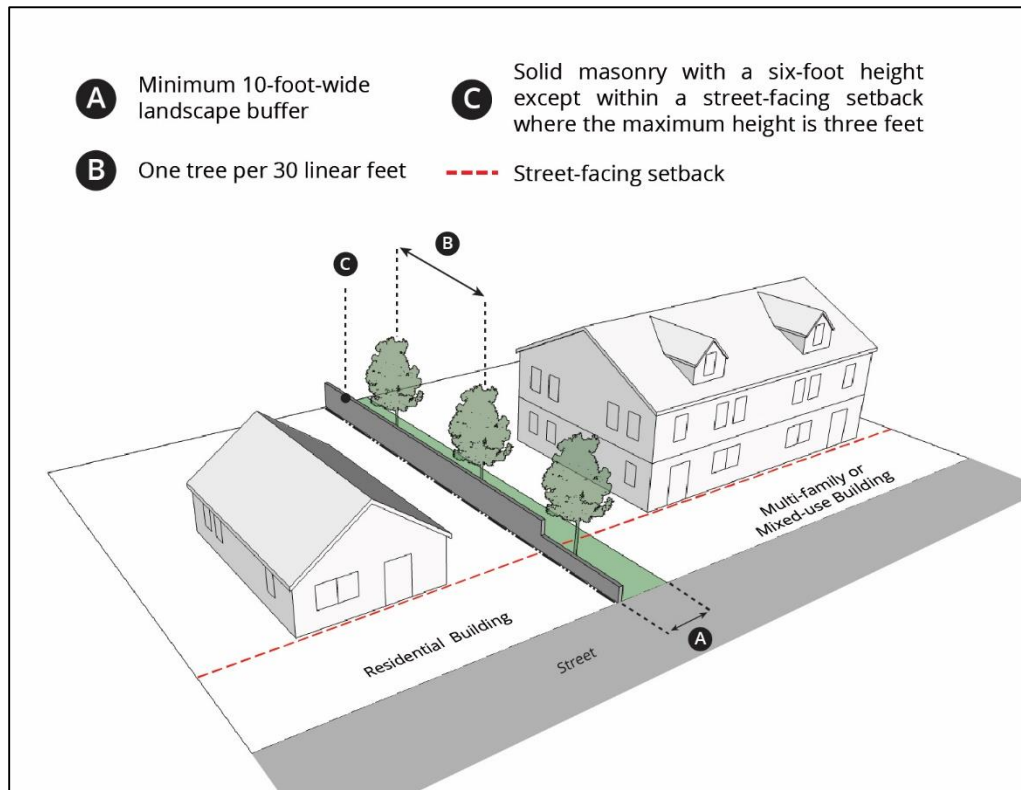
**Figure A.5.2**

- 5.3 Rooftop and ground-mounted utility cabinets, mechanical equipment, trash, and service areas shall be screened from view from the street with landscape planting, fencing, or a wall. The screening shall be at least the same height as the item being screened and shall be constructed with one or more of the materials used on the primary building. Solar equipment is exempt from this requirement.

#### **A.6. Landscaping and Screening**

- 6.1 At least 50 percent of the front setback area shall be landscaped.
- 6.2 A minimum 10-foot-wide landscape buffer shall be provided between multi-family or mixed-use development and abutting residential properties. The buffer shall include the following:

- a. A solid masonry wall with a six-foot height, except within a street-facing setback, where the maximum permitted height is three feet;



**Figure A.6.2a**

- b. 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; and
- 6.3 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.

#### **A.7. Fencing**

- 7.1 Fences, walls, hedges, and gates within required setbacks along all street frontages shall have a maximum height of three feet.
- 7.2 Chain link fencing is prohibited.
- 7.3 Vehicular entry gates and pedestrian entry gates shall have a maximum height of six feet.
- 7.4 Solid vehicular and pedestrian entry gates are prohibited. Entry gates shall be a minimum 50 percent open view.

### **A.8. Retaining Walls**

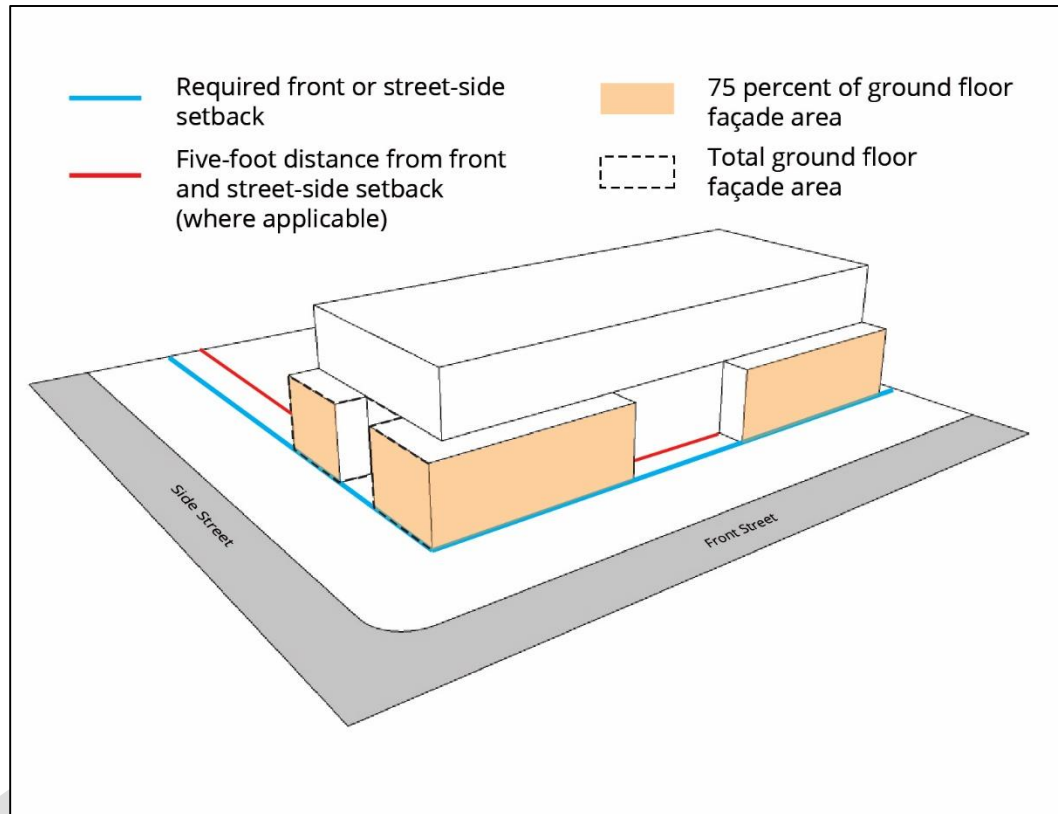
- 8.1 Retaining walls shall not exceed five feet in height. Where an additional retained portion is necessary, multiple-terraced walls shall be used. Terraced walls shall set back at least three feet from the lower segment.
- 8.2 Retaining walls shall not run in a straight continuous direction for more 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.9. Open Space**

- 9.1 A minimum of 20 percent of the site area shall consist of landscaped open space. Landscaped open space may be in the form of trees, hedgerows, flowerbeds, or ground cover vegetation, such as grass.
- 9.2 Common open space shall be provided in mixed-use developments in the form of public gathering spaces, such as plazas, outdoor dining areas, squares, or pocket parks. The space required is a minimum of 100 square feet per residential unit plus a minimum of two percent of the commercial square footage.
- 9.3 Common open space shall be provided in multi-family residential development projects in the form of gathering spaces, such as play areas, pool areas, patios, rooftop decks, or other community areas for the use of residents. The minimum space required is 100 square feet per residential unit.
- 9.4 Common open spaces shall provide shading for a minimum 15 percent of each open space area 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.

## A.10. Building Placement

- 10.1 To create a continuous streetscape appearance, development in a Community Place District shall place at least 75 percent of the ground floor of a building within five feet of the front and street-side setback (where applicable) requirement of the Town Code.



**Figure A.10.1**

- 10.2 A mixed-use residential project with a ground-floor commercial use shall provide site amenities on a minimum of 15 percent and maximum of 30 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:
- a. Landscape materials or raised planters;
  - b. Walls designed to accommodate pedestrian seating, no higher than 36 inches;
  - c. Site furnishings, including fountains, sculptures, and other public art; or
  - d. Tables and chairs associated with the ground floor use.



## B. BUILDING DESIGNS

### 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 façades 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 six feet;

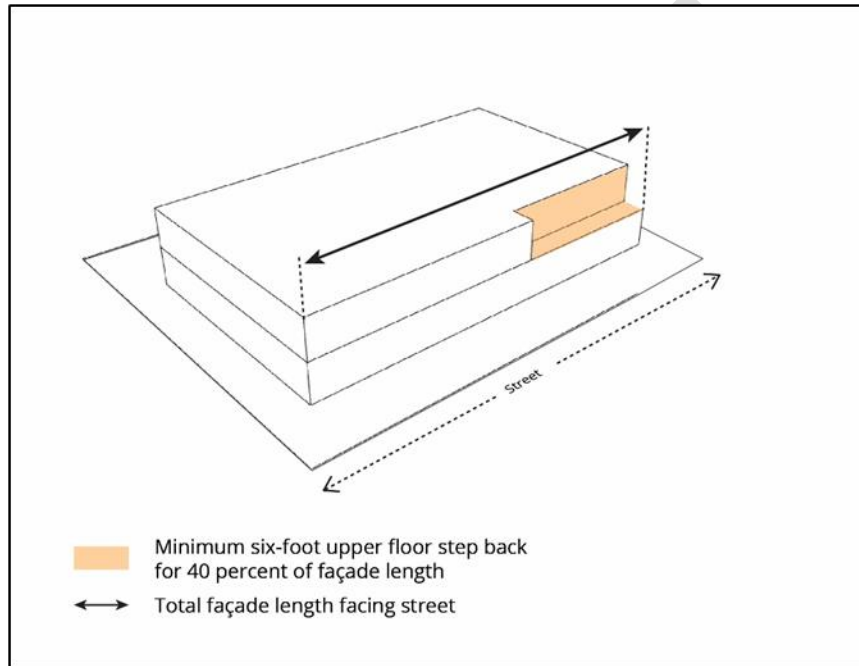
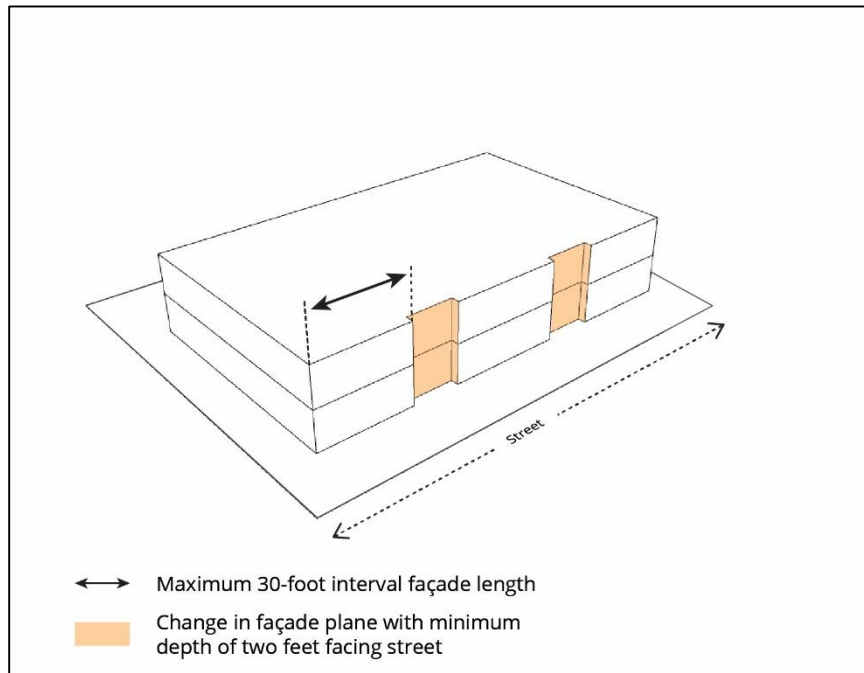


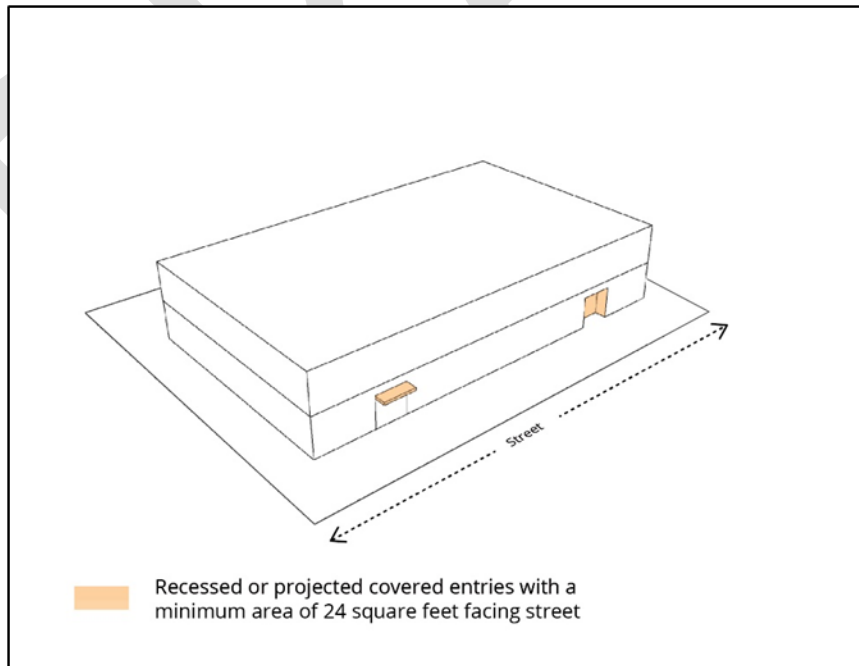
Figure B.1.1a

- 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;



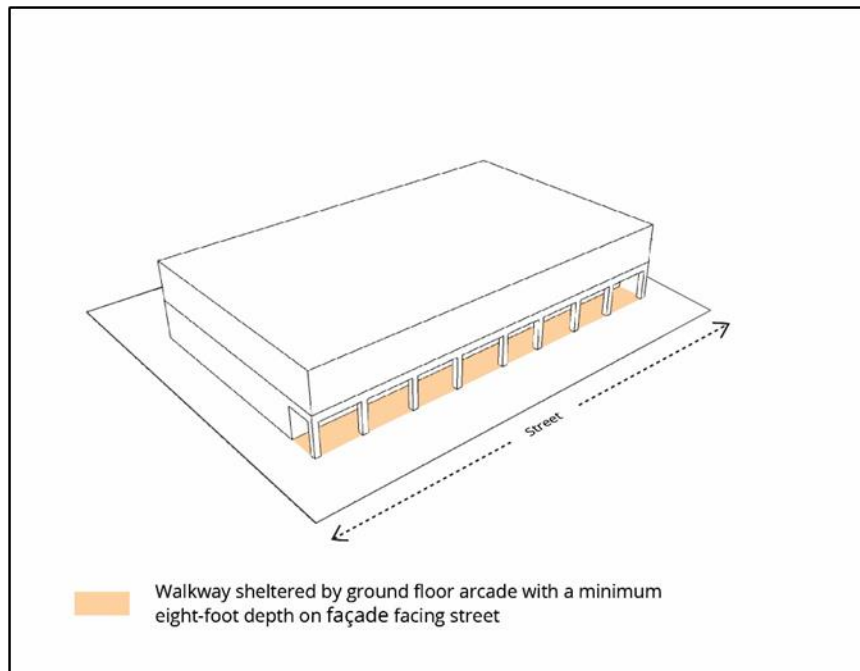
**Figure B.1.1b**

- c. Recessed or projected covered entries with a minimum area of 24 square feet;



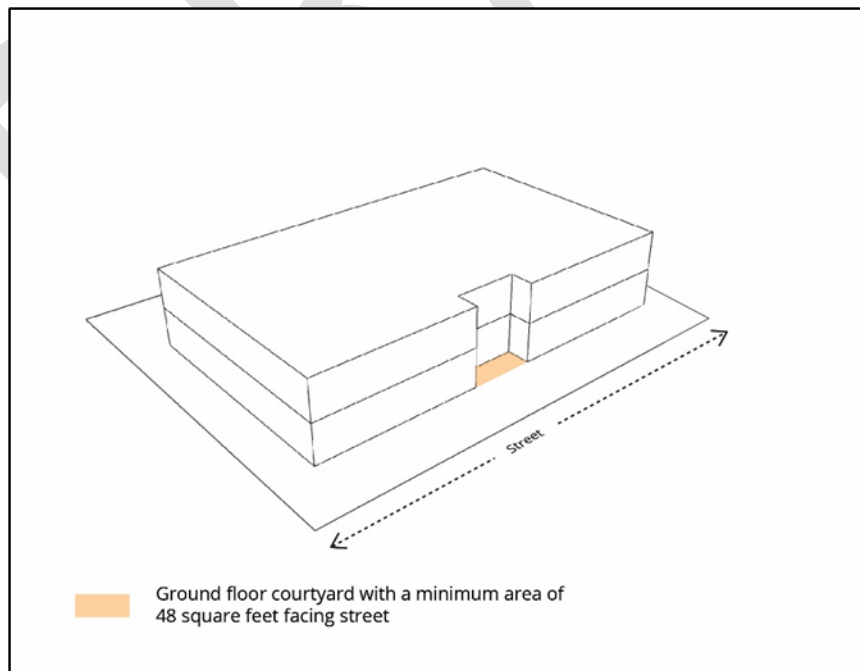
**Figure B.1.1c**

- d. An exterior arcade that provides a sheltered walkway within the building footprint with a minimum depth of eight feet, extending the full length of the façade;



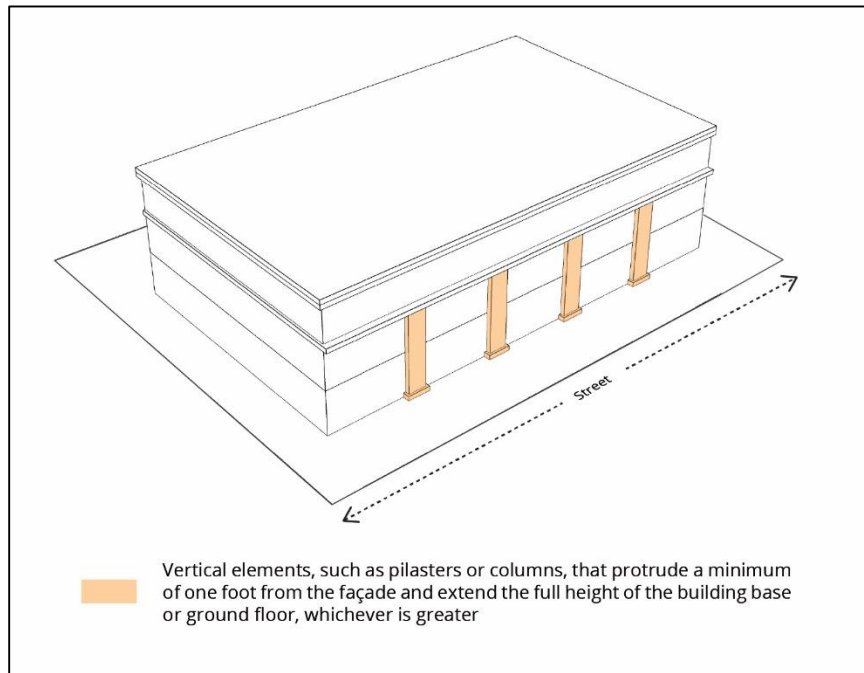
**Figure B.1.1d**

- e. Ground floor courtyards within the building footprint with a minimum area of 48 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 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 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 articulation change of 25 percent of the façade length.

### 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:
- Gables;
  - Building projection with a depth of a minimum of two feet;
  - Change in façade or roof height of a minimum of four feet;
  - Change in roof pitch or form; or
  - Inclusion of dormers, parapets, and/or varying cornices.

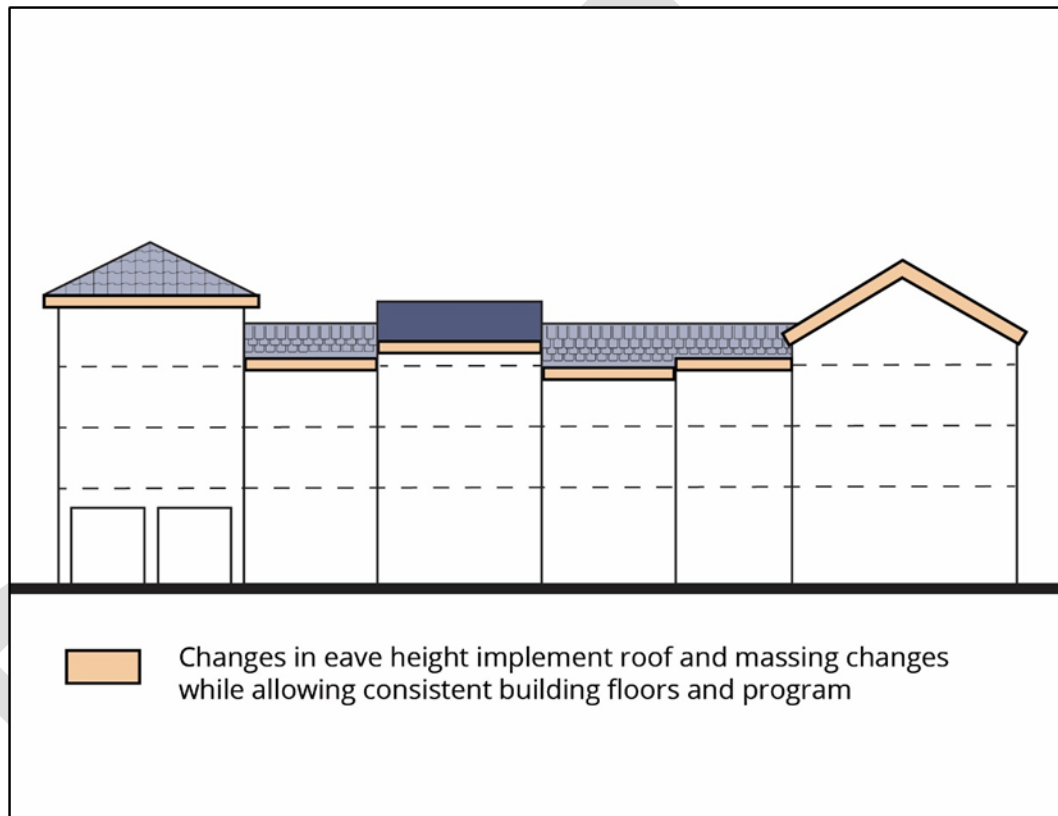


Figure B.3.1

- 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 length of the roof.



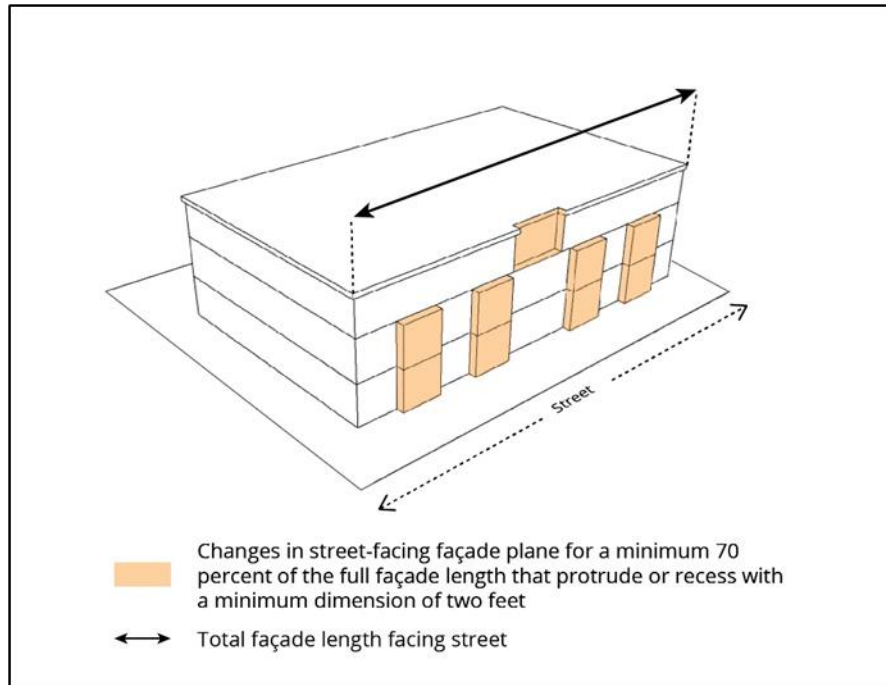
**Figure B.3.3**

- 3.4 Eave depths shall not exceed 24 inches from the façade plane.  
3.5 Carport roof materials shall be the same as the primary building.

**B.4. Façade Design and Articulation**

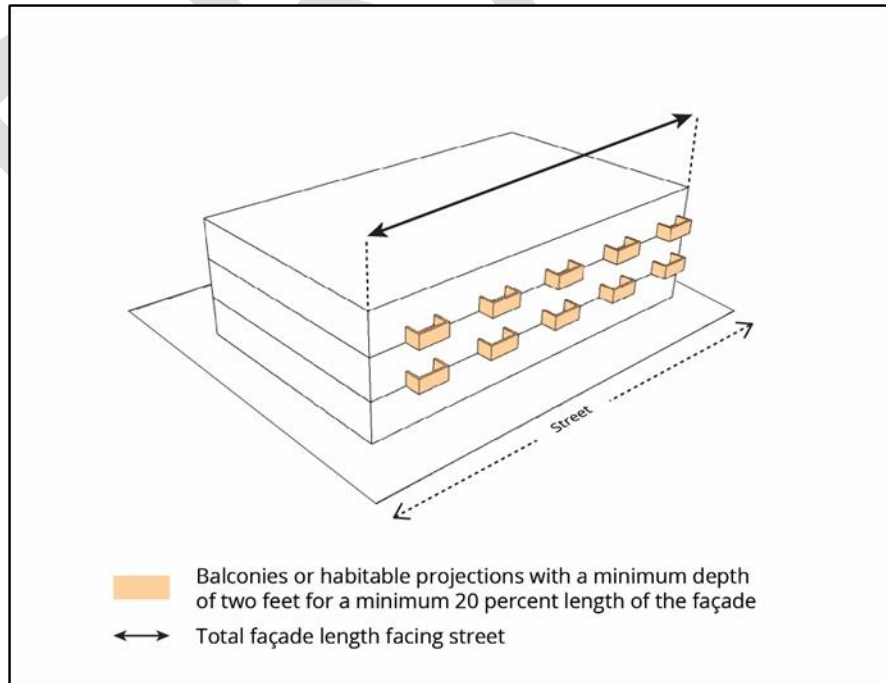
- 4.1 Buildings greater than two stories shall be designed to differentiate the base, middle, and top of the building on any street-facing façade. Each of these elements shall be distinguished from one another using at least two of the following solutions:

- a. Variation in building mass for a minimum of 70 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;



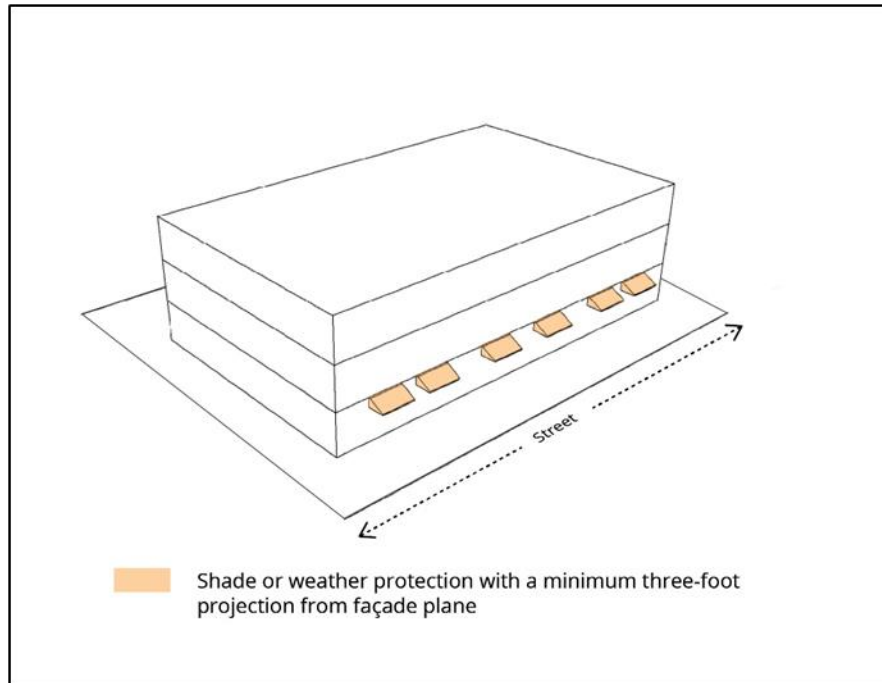
**Figure B.4.1a**

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



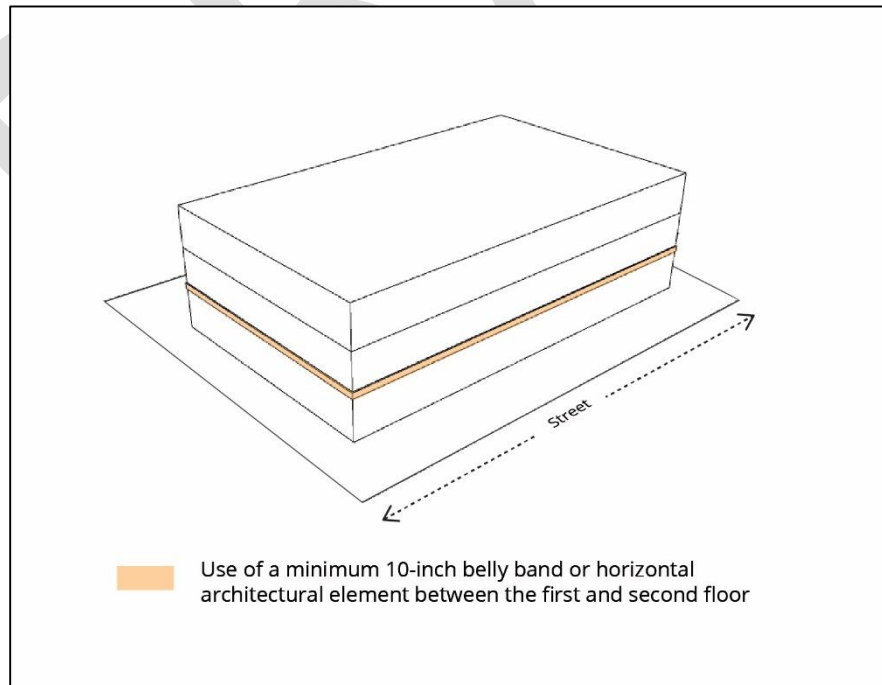
**Figure B.4.1b**

- 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. Use of a belly band or horizontal architectural element with a minimum height of 10 inches between the first and second floor; or

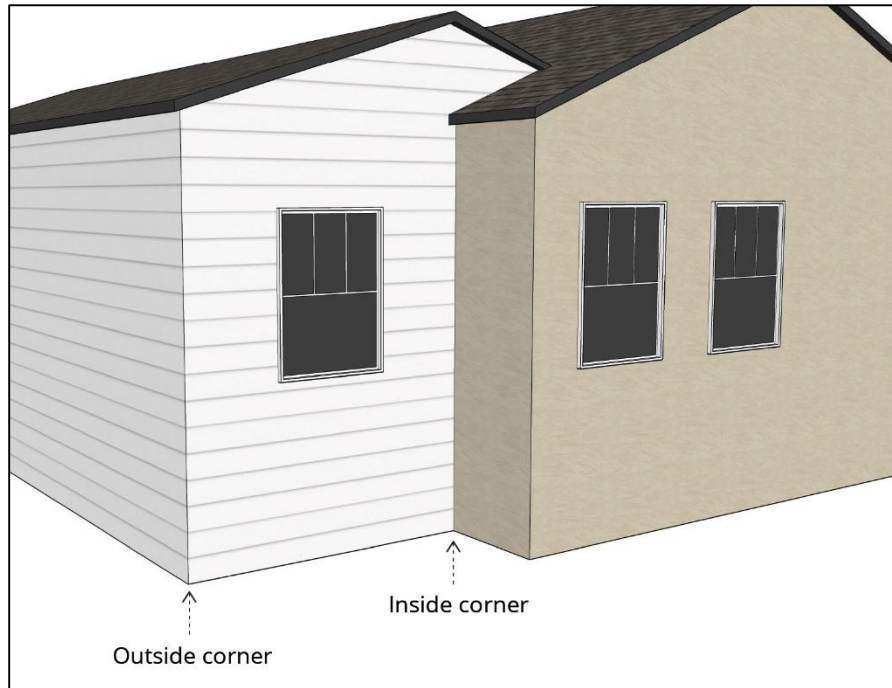


**Figure B.4.1d**



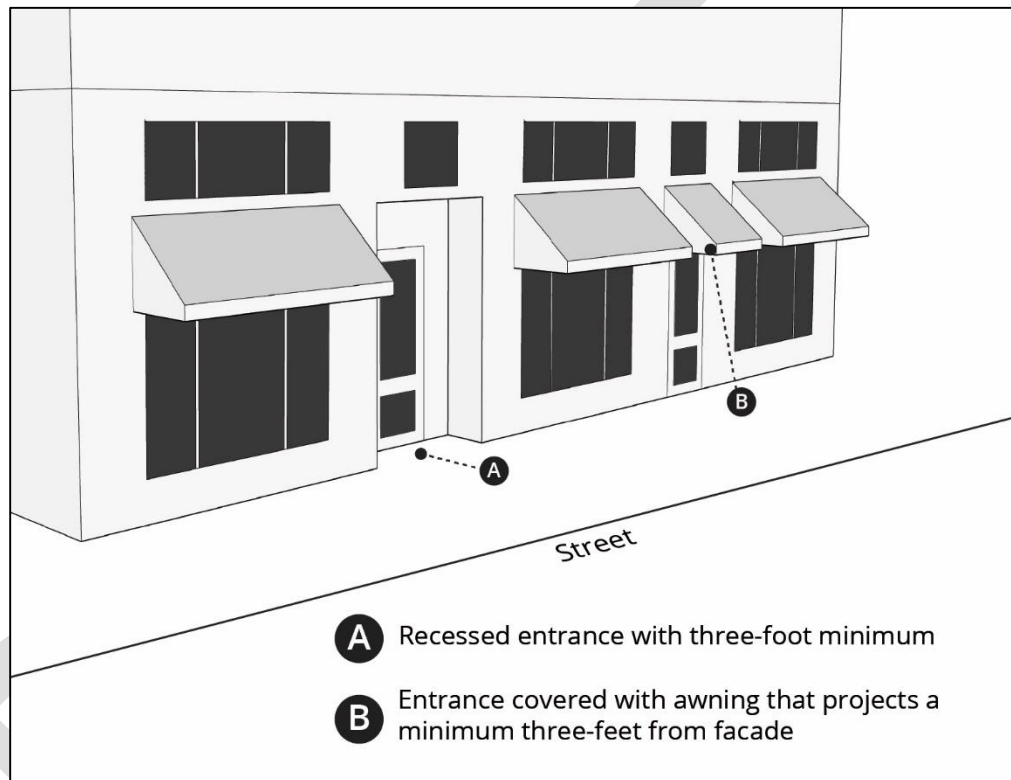
- e. The use of at least two different façade materials, each covering a minimum of 20 percent of the street-facing façade.
- 4.2 Buildings shall incorporate the same materials on all façades.
- 4.3 Variation in the street-facing façade planes shall be provided for buildings greater than one story by incorporating any combination of the following architectural solutions to achieve a minimum of 12 points:
- Architectural features, such as:
    - Arcade or gallery along the ground floor; *8 points*
    - Awnings or canopies; *6 points*
    - Building cornice; *5 points*
    - Belly band, or horizontal architectural element, between the first and second floor; or *5 points*
    - Façade sconce lighting. *3 points*
  - Bay windows; *6 points*
  - Façade plane of upper floors steps back a minimum of five feet from the ground floor façade; *6 points*
  - Material and color changes; *5 points*
  - Balconies or Juliet balconies; *5 points*
  - Landscaped trellises or lattices; *5 points*
  - Chimneys; *3 points*
  - Wide overhangs with projecting brackets; *3 points*
  - Window boxes or plant shelves; or *3 points*
  - Decorative elements such as molding, ornamentation, or corbels. *3 points*
- 4.4 Mixed-use buildings shall provide the following architectural elements along the ground floor:
- a. A minimum of 60 percent of the street-facing façade between two and 10 feet above the adjacent grade shall consist of transparent windows; and
  - b. A form of weather protection above storefront entries that extends from the façade a minimum of three feet.
- 4.5 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.

- 4.6 Changes in building materials shall occur at inside corners or at architectural features that break up the façade plane such as columns.



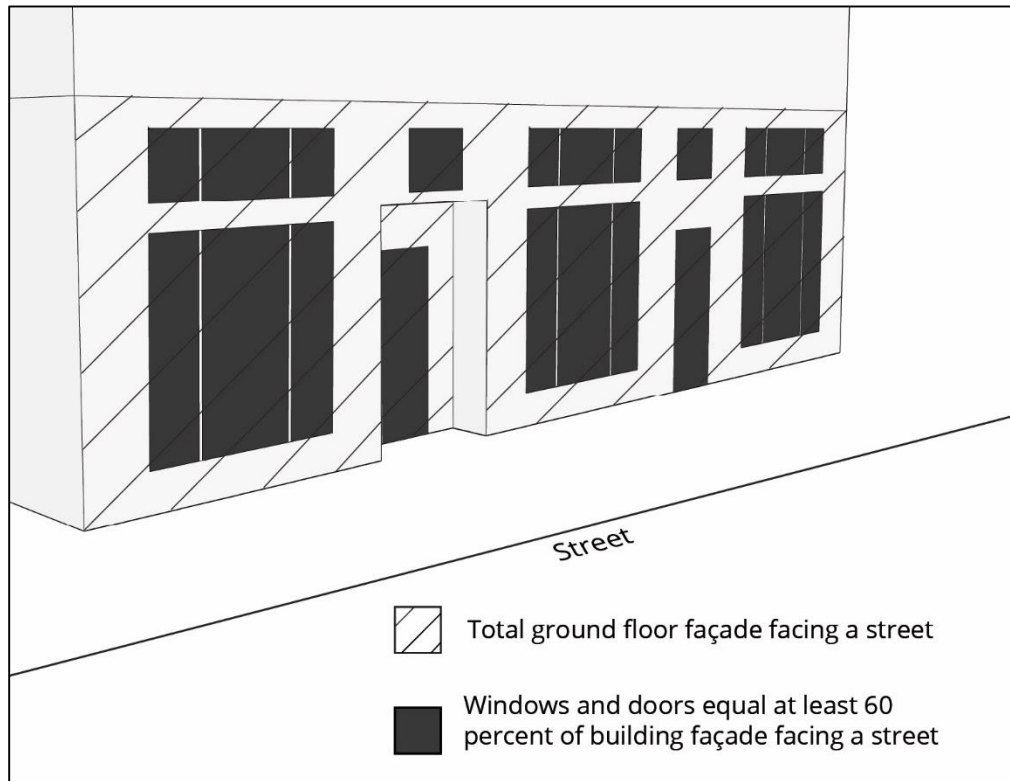
**Figure B.4.6**

- 4.7 Mixed-use development shall meet the following requirements:
- a. Pedestrian entries to ground-floor and upper-floor commercial 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.4.7a**

- 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.4.7b**

- 4.8 Mirrored windows are prohibited.
- 4.9 A primary building entrance shall be provided facing a street or common open space. All building entrances shall be recessed from the façade plane or covered by a building projection of at least three feet in depth measured from the wall plane.
- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 For buildings abutting a single-family zoning district, rooftop and upper floor terraces and decks are prohibited.

- 4.12 For buildings abutting a single-family zoning district, balconies shall only be permitted on the street-facing building façade. Such balconies shall be without any projections beyond the building footprint.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 Continuous blank façades on any floor level shall not exceed 25 percent of the entire façade length along any street.

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