

Architect Comments with Staff Responses *(in italic font)*

GENERAL

1. The Planning Dept needs to make sure the Planning Commissioners understand that these design guidelines/standards are not to be referred to or used at all when evaluating Discretionary Review projects that go through the normal DRC/PC approval process. The two processes are mutually exclusive, and Discretionary projects should be reviewed on their own merits. It must be understood and clearly stated that these “Standards” are not to be considered a standard that is compared to projects that do not apply for this streamlined process. These standards are not standards of excellence and should never be considered as such.
 - *Staff supports this recommendation and can include an additional statement when forwarding to Town Council.*
2. Could there be a tiered system for some of these requirements? Projects that are 3 units or 50 units or 500 units shouldn’t necessarily have the same standards.
 - *Although Objective Standards could be developed to differ depending on project size, the metric for most Standards has generally been applied to the street-facing façade. They have also been developed under the assumption that most projects will be 3-stories or less based on current height limits, and therefore significant differentiation may not be warranted.*

KEY TERMS

3. Are community recreation space and landscaped areas mutually exclusive?
 - *Yes, per A.10.1, “the following landscaped, private, and community recreation spaces are required for all qualifying projects and are calculated independent of each other.”*
4. In community areas, is there a minimum size of such an space? How big must it be to have it considered community space? Example: could a widened, paved node at a pathway intersection be considered community space? Like with a bench?
 - *Yes, minimum horizontal dimensions are 10’ by 6’ for each area.*
5. Does landscape area include pathways? A pathway is not included in the list of elements that are considered to not be a part of “Landscaping.” (additional site open space and/or maximum lot coverage standards exist in the Municipal Code.)
 - *If landscaping is proposed along the walkway, it would count towards the landscaped space requirement. A pathway/walkway without landscaping would not count.*

A.10 LANDSCAPE, PRIVATE, AND COMMUNITY RECREATION SPACES

6. Does landscape area mean any and all planted areas, including planters and pots on every floor?
 - *Area used for landscaped, private, and community recreation spaces are calculated independent of each other with no area counted twice, additional clarity could be added.*

7. Private recreation space should be proportionally based on the size of the unit. The Palo Alto standards require just 50 SF for each unit regardless of which floor or unit size. We propose a requirement of 10% of the living area. A 500 SF studio should not be required to have a 10'x15' balcony. There could be a minimum as well, 50 SF, so that it must still be able to hold a couple of people comfortably.
 - *The private recreation space standard was included for consistency with Town Code Section 29.10.065. Section A.10.1 requires each new dwelling unit to have private recreation space: 200 square feet on the ground floor, and 120 square feet above the ground floor. If the Planning Commission recommends an adjustment to this requirement, staff recommends ensuring there are still minimum dimension requirements.*
8. Can the required recreation space be broken down into many smaller community spaces? If so, what are the minimum dimensions? (Refer back to key terms comment.)
 - *Yes, if each area is a minimum of 6' by 10' for both community and private recreation spaces (A.10.1).*

A.11 BUILDING PLACEMENT

9. Requirement 11.1 states that 75% of the ground floor of a building shall be placed within 5 feet of the front & street side setbacks. Does this mean all the buildings on site? Does this mean 75% of the entire street frontage must have a building on its frontage? Or only the buildings that abut the street when multiple buildings are on site? Will buildings be calculated individually? What about corner lots and corner open plazas?
 - *This draft standard is currently worded to apply only to proposed buildings. The requirement applies to the buildings, not the street frontage. This does not mean that 75 percent of the street frontage needs buildings along the front; instead, it means that 75 percent of the area of the primary building(s) proposed must be on the street frontage (see Figure A.11.1).*
10. Requirement 11.2 states that there must be between 15-30% of the street frontage area shall have site amenities. If a restaurant is at this ground floor, and they would like the whole frontage to be tables & chairs and landscaping, how can they meet the 30% max. Why is a maximum necessary?
 - *Staff agrees that the maximum percentage could be deleted. The maximum percentage was initially included to ensure visibility to ground floor commercial uses.*

B.1 BUILDING DESIGN - Massing & Scale

11. Do these options apply to each individual building that abuts the street separately? Does this apply to buildings on site that do not abut the street?
 - *Staff can clarify that this requirement applies to the combined area of all primary buildings that face and abut the street.*
12. Some of these options seem mutually exclusive. How would a continuous arcade, continuously vertical recessed entries and recessed courtyards all exist on the same building facade? How would any of these options work with the arcade?
 - *Staff agrees that the arcade (B.1.1.d) and recessed building entry (B.1.1.c) options could not be used together unless the "full height of the façade" requirement is removed from B.1.1.c. An additional option would be to remove the arcade option. Staff looks for direction from the Planning Commission.*

13. Longer buildings and corner buildings will look monotonous with a continuous arcade. And architecturally speaking not attractive unless in a very particular setting. Shouldn't this option be contingent on the length of the building? When over 80 or 100 ft long, a 2/3 arcade approach could apply? And special treatment for corner lots. What about open corner plazas?
- *If the Planning Commission agrees, staff can remove the arcade option (B.1.1.d) or include a limit when the building façade is over a certain length.*
14. There should be an entire section that deals with corner lots, with points awarded for an open plaza/public amenity at the corner, or a tower at a corner (with a height increase exception for the tower), or another creative way to highlight/celebrate a corner, etc. although maybe too complex for this cookie cutter approach document.
- *Though not currently included, these could be developed in the future.*
15. B.1.1c suggests entries should be recessed all the way up the entire building height, but it is not good practice to have uncovered entries. How will this option be beneficial? Would a roof/covered porch at these entries be allowed for this option? Especially when this conflicts directly with the recommendation for a 3' recessed entry per diagram B.4.6a. If any fenestration element needs an awning it's the entrance.
- *A covered awning or eave would be allowed as long as the wall plane for the entry is recessed. Staff can clarify that this requirement applies to the wall plane, and projections such as awnings beyond the wall plane would be allowed.*
16. Option B.1.1f offers pilasters as an option, but pilasters are much less about massing as they are about facade articulation. Shouldn't this be in section B.4?
- *The pilaster option was added here as it would break up massing, but could be relocated.*

B.3 ROOF DESIGN

17. B.3 illustration has all pitched roofs This is not exemplary of most modern architecture and seems to show favor for sloped pitches. Offer more examples of flat roofs with eaves or parapets.
- *Staff recommends keeping the text of this standard, but deleting the graphic.*

B.4 FACADE DESIGN & ARTICULATION

18. B.4.1d & f shows a continuous belly band and cornice. Do these bands have to be continuous and unbroken? The pop outs, recesses, and continuous pilasters suggested in the other options would not be very harmonious with these options. These also seem to conflict with the recessed courtyards and entries and recessed upper floors if the bands must be continuous. What about different roof heights? This option is not very compatible with many other design elements suggested.
- *Staff can remove the belly band option (B.4.1.d).*
19. B.4.1d - A 10" tall belly band is quite thick for a modern line. This suggests only a traditional style building will be allowed. Palo Alto objectives require 4" min, not 10" min.
- *Staff can remove the belly band option (B.4.1.d), or the standard can be revised to reflect Palo Alto's four-inch requirement.*

20. B.4.1f - Requiring a “floor to ceiling height” is a structural dimension that is measured in a cross section and cannot be perceived from the outside. The height between the top of the top windows and the top of the parapet is what is perceived. Is this what is supposed to be 24” + lower floor framing/ceiling assembly height? Interior finishes, such as dropped ceilings should not be part of this calculation as they are not perceived from the outside. How does a sloped interior ceiling height get calculated? It’s really the facade height, parapet height, etc that should be controlled.
- *Staff agrees and can work with the Consultant to update the standard to apply to the exterior façade height.*
21. B4.2 - When a building side facade is on the property line or within 5' of it, how can this requirement be fulfilled? Windows are not allowed. Further, expensive accent materials, that can enhance a street side facade will be wasted money on a side no one can see. This will prohibit small amounts of high end exterior materials from being used at all.
- *This section refers to window types, not windows in general. The Commission directed staff to include a 360-degree architecture requirement.*
22. B.4.3 - Almost all of the first listed architectural features are found in the previous section under B.4.1. These are redundant.
- *Section B.4.1 includes four items that are listed under B.4.3 (awnings, belly bands, balconies, and material changes); however, B.4.1 only applies to buildings greater than two stories, while B.4.1 applies to buildings greater than one-story. Due to the requirements in Section B.4.1, buildings greater than two-stories will already have implemented some of the requirements in B.4.3. Section B.4.3 is to ensure that buildings greater than one-story also include façade variations.*
23. B.4.3 - Who will determine if a particular architectural “solution”, aka decorative feature, will constitute points? Will one juliet balcony, or planter box mean the points are achieved? One chimney, one bay window? This points system lacks specificity and at the same time is entirely too specific about traditional style architectural features. Most of these features are entirely inappropriate on modern architecture. When we say “Bay Window”, can we add in “or Box Window”, and “angled Box Window”? The term Bay Window is too specific/limiting. And what about the unfortunate designer that decides “hey maybe I’ll take one of each thing on the menu?” One bay window, one planter, one awning, one pilaster, one arcade - oh wait maybe two, one balcony, one trellis, one braced overhang, one corbel, one scoop with sprinkles, and why don’t you just throw in a 10” thick caramel flavored belly band just for fun”. Are we making an ice cream sundae here? In my absurd example, the Town would have no choice but to approve it as long they scored the minimum 16 points” To quote their own language: “ . . . by incorporating any combination of the following architectural solution to achieve a minimum of 16 points” with no mention of any cohesive design theme, scale, proportion, repetition, cadence, architectural nuance, color, materials, etc.
- *Staff can either add greater specificity for certain items or remove this requirement. Staff looks for direction from the Planning Commission.*
24. B.4.5 - This illustration should be stricken of the “Architectural Features” pilasters. Not Good
- *The illustration showing the column or “architectural feature” was a specific request from a previous Planning Commission hearing, but it could be removed.*

25. B.4.6a - This requirement seems to conflict with the vertically continuously recessed entry option from section B.1.1c.
- *This section requires recessed entries or covered entries. Additionally, Section B.1.1.C refers to the wall plane, not an awning projection. Staff can clarify that B.1.1.c applies to the wall plane.*
26. B.4.6b - How about adding in another drawing that shows glass extending to the floor? Why say between 2 and 10 feet above the sidewalk? Why can't the glass extend to the sidewalk?
- *Glass can extend down to the grade, but it wouldn't count towards the 60 percent requirement between two and 10 feet.*
27. B.4.10 - Wouldn't it be more appropriate to have a setback to roof top decks and balconies, rather than prohibiting them entirely from a building? The building could be very large and deep. What about a daylight plane?
- *This change could be made if recommended by Planning Commission.*
28. B.4.11 - Why can't the balconies extend beyond the footprint if you can prove that views to residential uses are prevented?
- *As previously discussed, this is included as one method for objectively reducing privacy impacts.*
29. B.4.12 - Why is this even a section? Isn't this all covered in great detail in the previous sections?
- *This standard was developed from Planning Commission Subcommittee direction to restrict long, unarticulated buildings fronting the street.*

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