

Building an Understanding: Objective Development Standards

Public Meeting #2

June 13, 2023



AECOM

Welcome!

Introductions

City of South Pasadena

- Alison Becker, Deputy Director
- Ben Jarvis, Senior Planner
- Matt Chang, Planning Manager
- Sandra Robles, Associate Planner

AECOM

- Susan Ambrosini, Principal
- Scott Williamson, Project Manager

Agenda

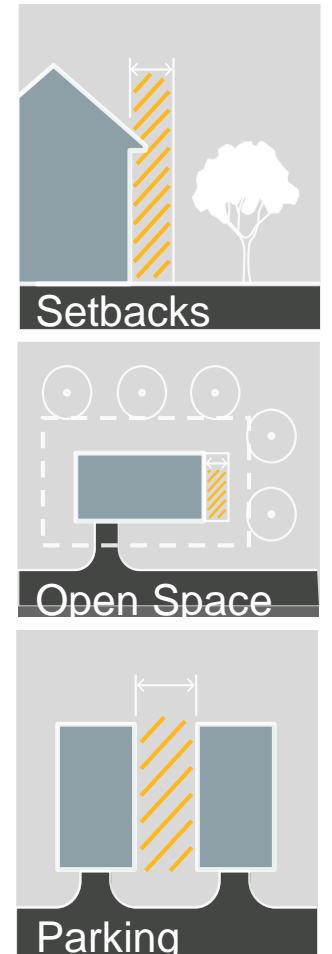
- What Are Objective Development Standards?
- Why do we need objective standards?
- Project Overview
- Objective Development Standards Toolkit
- Q & A
- Closing Comments



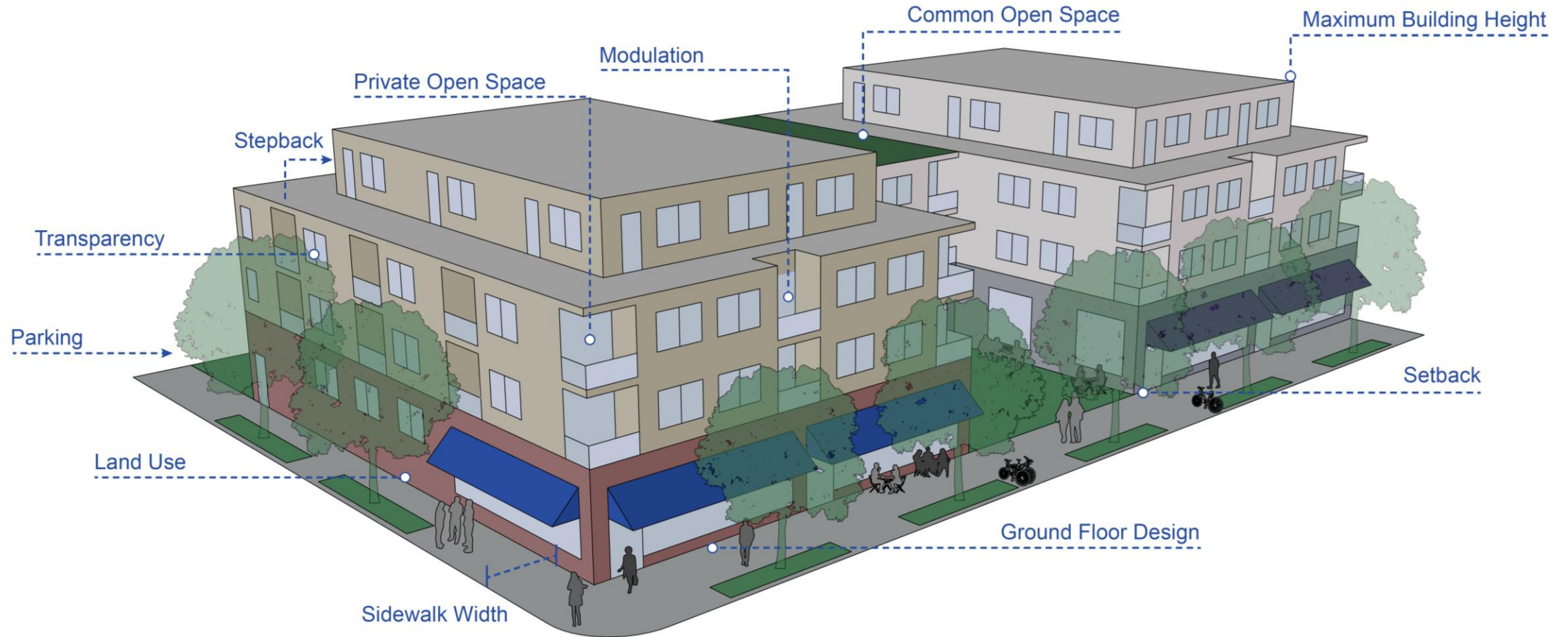
**What are objective
development standards?**

What are Objective Development Standards?

- Objective Development Standards (ODS) are a set of rules for development that contain measurable requirements that are easy to understand and review.
- They are inherently straightforward, requiring no special knowledge or personal experience to understand, interpret or review.
- The removal of subjectivity (design discretion) from the design review process makes the approvals process more simple, transparent and streamlined.

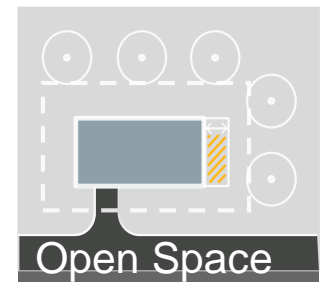


Typical Development and Design Standards





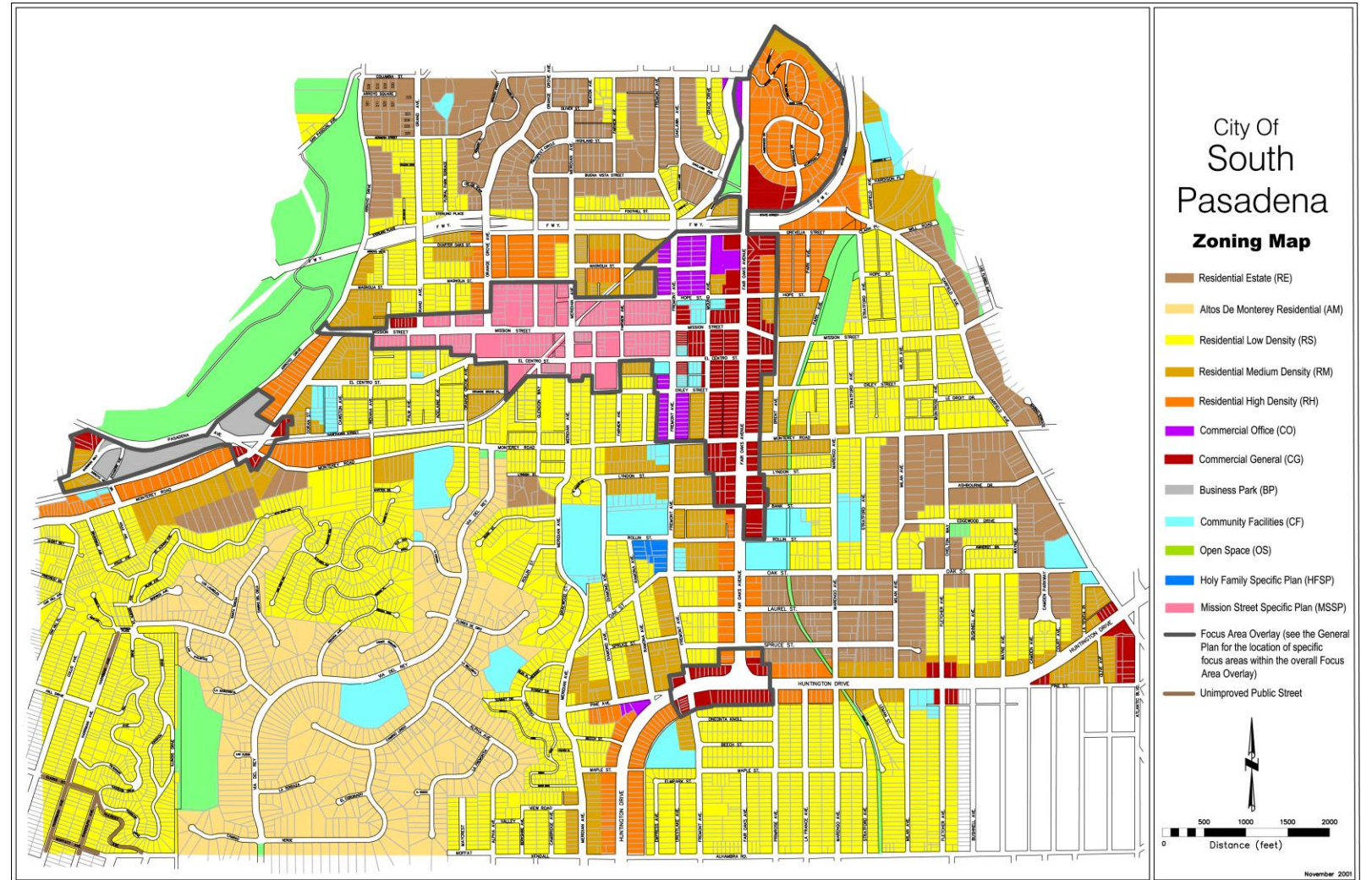
Guidelines vs. Standards

Guidelines	Standards
<p>Guidelines are recommendations with terms like “should”, “may”, “encourage”, “character”, “adequate”, “appropriate”. Examples of guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Plant appropriate trees along the streets to maintain community character.” • “Blank walls may be prohibited along any street-facing façade.” 	<p>Standards are requirements with terms like: “shall”, “must” and specific criteria that includes dimensions, numbers and/or percentages. Examples of standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Trees shall be planted at every 10 feet along the streets to provide shade.” • Blank walls of more than 15 linear feet are prohibited on any street-facing façade.”



Where would the standards apply?

-  Residential Medium-Density (RM)
-  Residential High-Density (RH)

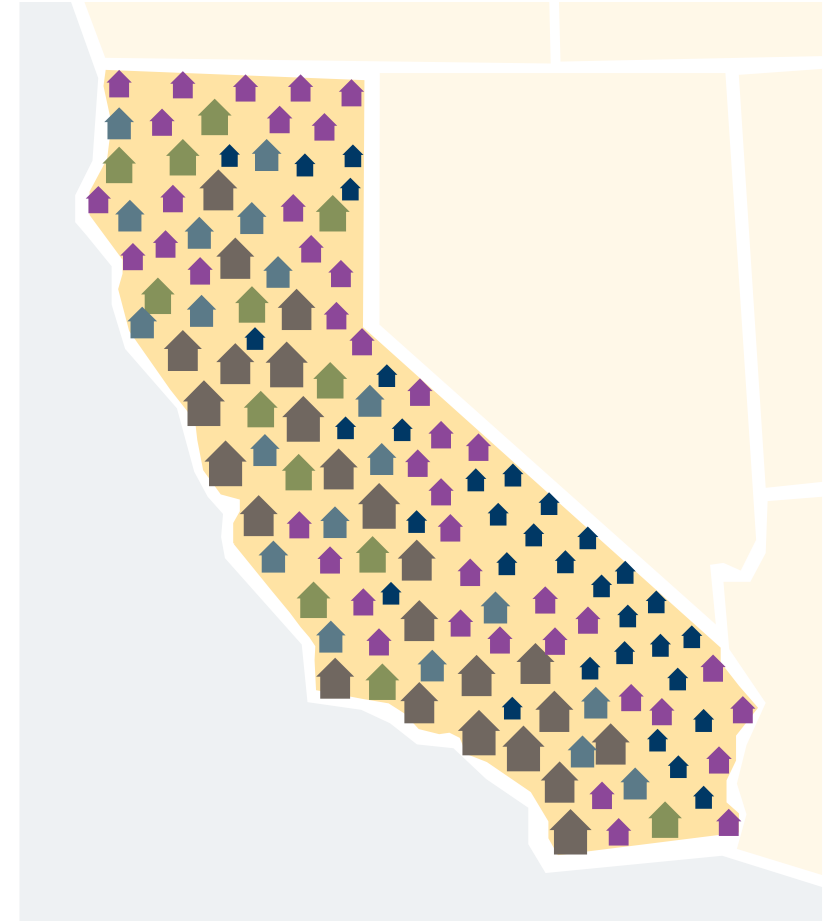




Why do we need objective standards?

Putting Things into Perspective: State Context

- California must plan for more than 2.5 million homes in the next eight-year planning cycle
- While recently California is seeing slight population declines, Los Angeles County grew by about 2% from 2010 to 2020
- Housing construction continues to lag housing demand, leading to limited supply and rising costs
- California housing has become the most expensive in the nation
- About 54% of renters spend more than 30% of household income on housing



Putting Things into Perspective: Recent Legislation

SB 167 (1982, amend 2018) Housing Accountability Act

- Cities may not deny, reduce the density of, or make housing development projects infeasible

SB 35 (2018) Streamlined Affordable Housing

- Housing development projects in cities failing to meet RHNA goals permitted on a ministerial basis
 - Moderate: projects with 10% below market
 - Very low/low: projects with 50% below market

SB 330 (2020) Housing Crisis Act

- Allows developers to submit a preliminary Housing Development Application and Development review process period reduced from 120 to 90 days
- SB 8 (1/1/2022) extended HCA through 2030



Project Overview

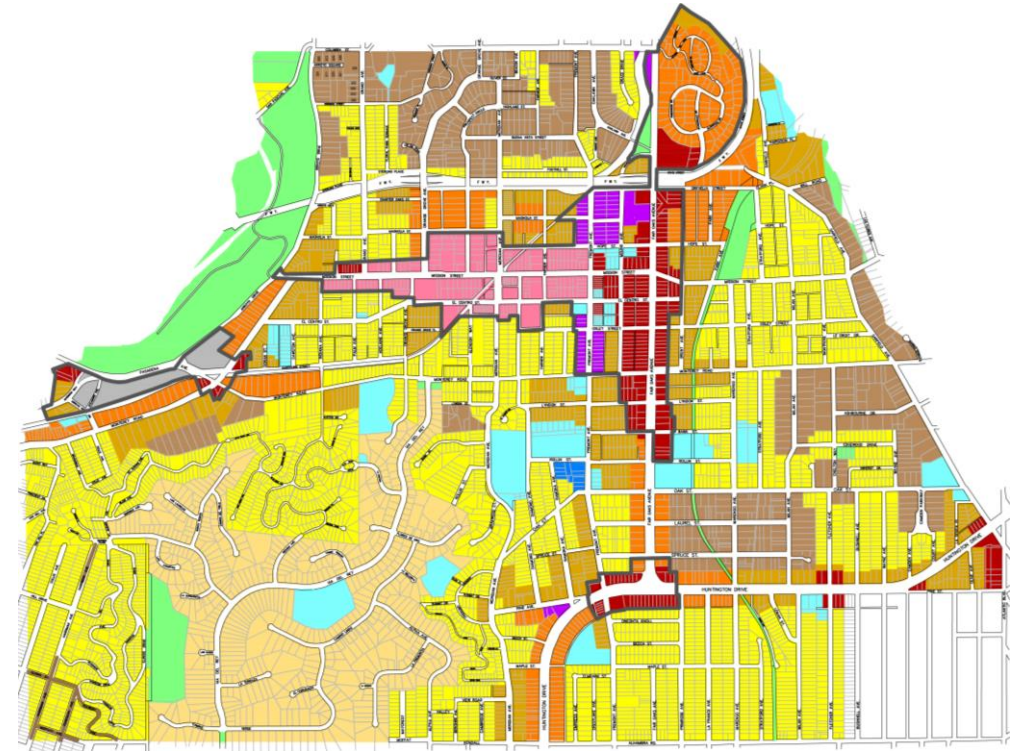
Project Overview

- Funded by SCAG to document, assess, and modernize multi-unit and mixed-use objective development standards and entitlement/permitting processes
- Project serving the cities of Montebello, Santa Fe Springs, Santa Monica, and **South Pasadena**
- Help support a greater understanding of the role of objective development standards and accelerate housing production
- To support the City with objective development standards as well as standardized and streamlined entitlements/permitting processes

Project Deliverables

Several tools are being developed by AECOM, to assist the City's transition to Objective Development Standards:

- High-level analyses of existing policy documents, development standards and regulations, and permit procedures
- Updated multi-family development permit application form and process flowchart
- Online Interactive Fee Estimator Tool
- **Objective Development Standards Toolkit**
- Toolkit Fact Sheet



Project Engagement Milestones



What We Heard

City Staff Study Session

- Consider changes to parking standards
- Avoid “boxy” development, focus on articulation and good design
- Incorporate slope considerations in standards for hillside areas

Planning Commission Study Session

- Street-level experience of a building’s design is especially important
- Design solutions to reduce large massing, step downs abutting lower density residential
- Consistent project design is critical
- Driveways should not be the central design feature, rather features like courtyards
- Standards should be balanced to protect from worst designs, but allow for good design

What We Heard

Workshop 1 – Design Review Board

- Massing variation requirements that make development look ‘Lego-like’ should be avoided
- Modulation could be required via a percentage of the overall façade area, giving flexibility to designers without prescribing a horizontal dimension
- Material variation could be specified by requiring 2 – 3 different materials be used on facades
- Open space is important, and where possible should be accessible to the public in denser areas like Mission Street
- Landscaping is important as South Pasadena is a part of Tree City USA
- Parking should be hidden from visibility of the street if possible – ideally underground or tucked behind buildings



Objective Development Standards Toolkit

What is the ODS Toolkit?

- AECOM has worked with the City to create a menu of objective standards for a selection of multi-unit zones that the City can consider incorporating into its Zoning Code
- Toolkit gives the City the flexibility to select the standards that work for them and adapt (if needed) to the City's context or to influence a desired outcome

Zone type

Standard category

Standard Sub-category

Summary of the context and rationale behind the proposed standards in this category

Statement of intent relevant to the standards to follow, often incorporated into zoning codes to provide context and understanding for users and decision makers

Standard

Supporting Illustration

II. Mixed-Use

Form & Scale

Setbacks

Considerations

- The City's Zoning Code already includes setback requirements, which require a minimum distance between a building and the public right-of-way. It is proposed at 10 feet in this zone.
- Setback ranges are implemented by requiring a percentage of the building's frontage to be within a specified distance of the minimum setback. These ranges include a minimum setback applicable to all parts of a building and a maximum setback applicable to a percentage of the building facade (e.g. 70%, as used below).
- The flexibility provided by requiring only a percentage of the parcel frontage to be placed within the range is important for the accommodation of open space areas, outdoor dining, driveways, and/or other amenity spaces.
- In pedestrian-oriented areas, especially those with alley access to a parcel, percentages of 80% or higher may be appropriate, while in more auto-oriented areas, percentages may be lowered to accommodate more auto-oriented uses and circulation needs, e.g. 50%, while still establishing a more pedestrian-oriented character.
- Additional considerations can be found in the Common Zone Toolkit.

Intent

To provide a consistent street edge that defines the pedestrian environment, enhances the character of the public right-of-way, and creates a sense of place.

Standards

Street setbacks: Buildings shall be located within 5 feet of the minimum setback for at least 70 percent of the building frontage along the primary right-of-way and 50 percent along any secondary right-of-way, excluding alleys.

At least 70% of linear frontage within 5 ft of the minimum setback line

SCAG REAP: Objective Development Standards Bundle (Los Angeles County)
Prepared for the City of Santa Fe Springs, 10 February 2023

6

ODS Toolkit

- Today, we'll be discussing two of South Pasadena's zones in the Toolkit:



Residential
Medium-Density
(RM)
30 dwelling units per acre



Residential
High-Density
(RH)
45 dwelling units per acre

Standards Categories

Form & Scale

- Form (shape) and scale (size) standards include building setbacks, streetwall, stepbacks, rooflines and façade modulation.

Frontages

- Frontage standards include ground floor and street-facing building façades.

Open Space

- Open space standards include minimum open space recommendations based on the size and type of project.

Parking

- Parking standards include vehicular access (driveways), surface parking (setbacks, landscaping and trees) and structured parking (setbacks).

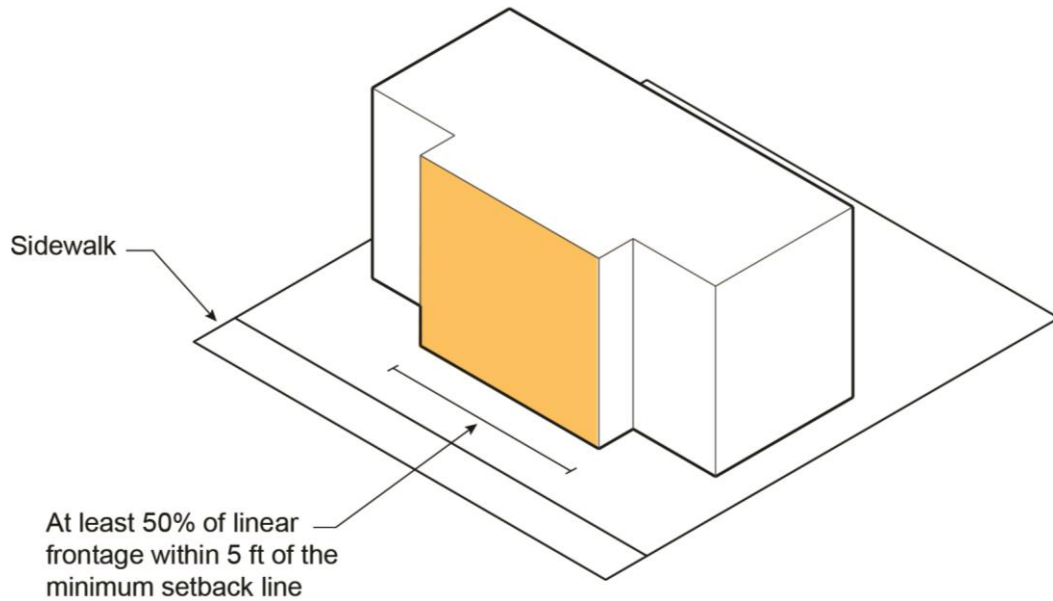
Form & Scale Standards

- **Street setbacks**
- Corner buildings
- Landscaping
- **Street stepbacks**
- Interior stepbacks
- Façade area
- Building length
- **Façade modulation**
- Façade break
- Roofline variation



Street Setbacks

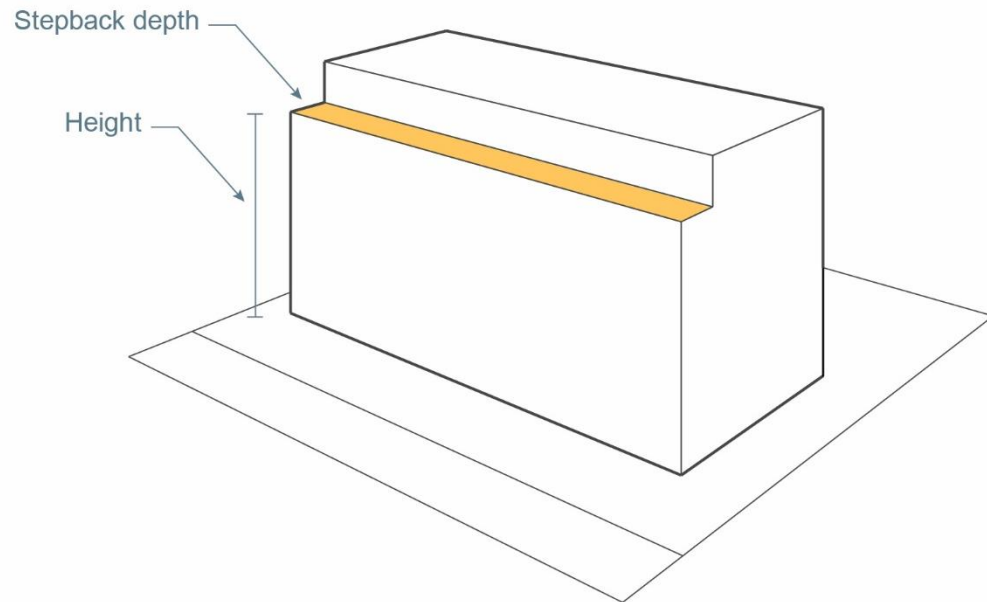
Buildings shall be set back a minimum of 5 feet from the property line. A minimum of 50 percent of ground-floor building frontage shall be placed at or within 5 feet of the front setback.



A consistent setback of approximately 5 feet, being used for landscaping and private open space.

Street Stepbacks

On street-facing façades, portions of a building above the third story shall be stepped back a minimum of 5 feet, measured from the building façade.

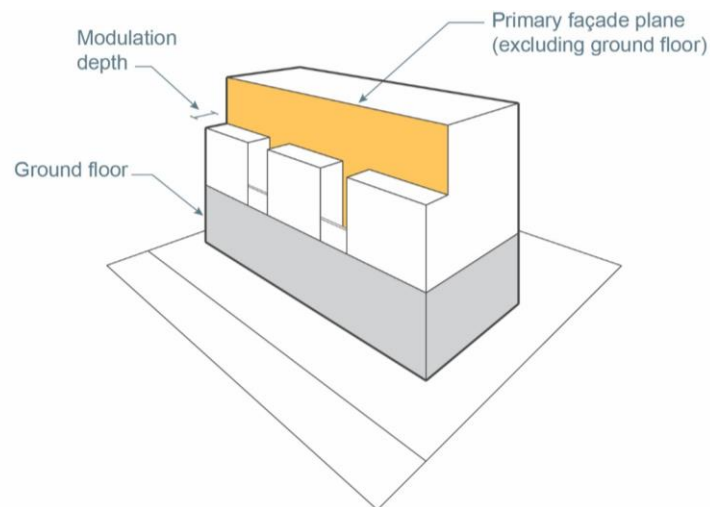


Upper floor stepbacks, which are also providing spaces for terraces.

Façade Area

Street-facing façades of 50 feet or longer shall modulate a minimum of 25 percent of the area above the ground floor between 2 and 12 feet in depth from the primary façade plane, defined as the vertical plane with the greatest surface area above the ground floor.

- Modulation shall be a minimum depth of 2 feet, may be recessed or projected (but not into the public right-of-way), and is not required to be continuous or open to the sky.



A façade using modulation, recessing and materials to create visual interest.

Frontage Standards

- **Ground Floor: Entrances**
- Ground Floor: Elevation
- Ground Floor: Paths
- Ground Floor: Walls and Fences
- Ground Floor: Stoops and Patios
- **Façades: Composition**
- **Façades: Transparency**
- **Façades: Windows**
- Façades: Materials
- Façades: Balconies
- Façades: Lighting
- Façades: Screening
- Façades: Fences and Walls



Ground Floor Entrances

Residential units located adjacent to a street shall have a primary entrance facing the street.

Entrances shall have a minimum 3-foot covered landing area at the same grade as the interior floor.

Entrances shall incorporate at least three of the following:

- a) Recess at least 2 feet from the building façade;
- b) Overhead projection of at least 2 feet in depth (e.g. porch roof);
- c) A sidelight window, adjacent window, or door with a window;
- d) At least one stair, up or down, from the pedestrian pathway;
- e) Paving material, texture, or pattern differentiated from the pedestrian pathway.



Ground floor units with direct access to the street promote an active, accessible and comfortable pedestrian environment.

Facades: Composition

Composition: Street-facing façades shall include at least three of the following, consistent with the architectural style:

- a) Pattern of modulation or fenestration;
- b) Datum lines along the length of the building (e.g. cornice) at least 4 inches in depth;
- c) Repeated projections (e.g. architectural detail, shading) at least 4 inches in depth;
- d) Balconies over 20 percent of the elevation;
- e) Screening (e.g. lattices, louvers);
- f) Individual exterior material not to exceed eight inches in a visible dimension (e.g. brick).



Building façade with a variety of projections, modulation and fenestration types, contributing to a well designed and coherent facade.

Transparency and Windows

- **Transparency:** Street-facing façades shall incorporate glazing for at least 25 percent of the façade. Side-loaded townhomes shall incorporate glazing for at least 30 percent of the front-facing façade.
- **Windows:** Windows shall be recessed at least 2 inches from the face of the façade; flush windows may be permitted per review authority approval. Mirrored, tinted or highly reflective glazing is prohibited. Vinyl windows are prohibited.



Ground floor apartment windows recessed over 2 inches and glazing that maintains transparency to the street. Landscaping is used in this example to provide privacy.

Open Space Standards

- Minimum area
- **Private open space:**
 - Access
 - Dimensions
 - Distribution
- **Common open space:**
 - Access
 - Types (backyard or courtyard on the ground floor; roof deck, terrace, or similar on upper floors; multi-use driveways)
 - Dimensions
 - Distribution



Private Open Space

Access: Private Open Space shall abut and have direct access to the associated tenant space.

Dimensions: Private Open Space shall have a minimum area of 40 square feet and a minimum dimension of 5 feet in each direction, with a vertical clearance of at least 8 feet.

Distribution: Private Open Space shall be outdoors and may be located within a required setback.



Balconies providing private open space for individual units.

Common Open Space

Access: Common Open Space shall be available to all tenants of the building at no cost.

Types: Common Open Space shall be provided by at least one of the following and designed to comply with the associated standards:

- a) Backyard or courtyard on the ground floor;
- b) Roof deck, terrace, or similar on upper floors;
- c) **Multi-use driveway.**

Dimensions: Common Open Space shall have a minimum area of 400 square feet and a minimum dimension of 15 feet in each direction.

Distribution: Common Open Space shall be outdoors, and a minimum of 80 percent of Common Open Space shall be open to the sky.



A courtyard providing common open space for residents.

Common Open Space – Multi-use driveways

Types: Common Open Space shall be provided by at least one of the following and designed to comply with the associated standards:

- a) Backyard or courtyard on the ground floor;
- b) Roof deck, terrace, or similar on upper floors;
- c) Multi-use driveway
 - **Permeable pavers.** The entire surface of the driveway shall be comprised of permeable pavers.
 - **Landscaped buffer.** The driveway shall be lined by a minimum 2-foot wide planted area, except at garage entries and pedestrian pathways. If the landscaped buffer is adjacent to a wall, it shall include shrubs or vines of at least 24 inches in height.



A multi-use driveway providing common open space for residents.



Questions

Thank you!

For more information and questions, please contact
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