San Joaquin Valley REAP
REGIONAL EARLY ACTION PLANNING

Residential Objective Design Standards
A Guidebook for the San Joaquin Valley

DECEMBER 2024

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Following the passage of California State Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) in 2019, local jurisdictions may no longer use subjective design guidelines to deny or reduce the density of housing projects. For housing projects undergoing streamlined review, jurisdictions may only apply objectively written design and development standards, designed for predictable and consistent interpretation by applicants, reviewers, and approval bodies.

Currently, only a small number of jurisdictions in the San Joaquin Valley region have adopted objective design standards. This limits the remaining jurisdictions' regulatory authority to basic development standards included in their zoning ordinances.

The *San Joaquin Valley Objective Design Standards Guidebook* is intended as a tool for local planners in the San Joaquin Valley region as they consider the adoption of objective design standards in their community. Rather than a model set of standards, the guidebook includes best practice examples of objective design standards across a range of potential topics.

The example design standards discussed in the guidebook meet the following general objectives:

- Emphasize high-quality, human-scaled building design and architectural elements.
- Promote thoughtful, context-sensitive site design.
- Maintain the livability of residential developments and enhance the character of the community.
- Encourage a multimodal environment with sustainable pedestrian, bike, transit, and auto connectivity.

The guidebook addresses objective design standards topics for common housing types in the San Joaquin Valley region, organized in two sub-chapters; *2.1 Single-Family Residential and Missing Middle Housing Types*, and *2.2 Multi-Family Residential and Mixed-Use*. The single-family and missing middle section discusses topics related to the overall layout and design of subdivisions and the design of "house form" building types, including building and site elements. The multi-family and mixed-use sub-chapter includes best practice standards for site design and access, building scale and massing, ground floor design, building materials and other elements, and provision and design of on-site open space for multi-family and residential mixed-use developments.

In addition to the example standards laid out in *Chapter 2*, *Chapter 1* discusses a series of additional considerations, including approaches to writing objective design standards to ensure clarity and objectivity, potential cost implications of standards, and options for design review processes in compliance with State law.

Finally, *Chapter 3* outlines a step-by-step roadmap to implementation, starting with review of existing zoning regulations, community priorities and desires, and moving on to selection of relevant topics and approaches from the guidebook, review and - if necessary - adjustment of existing review processes for consistency with State law, and adoption of the objective design standards as part of the zoning ordinance or as a stand-alone document.

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Intent of the Guidebook

The Residential Objective Design Standards Guidebook is a tool to provide a foundation for local planners in San Joaquin Valley jurisdictions to implement objective design standards in their community. The intent is to address design topics that are prevalent and of relevance to local jurisdictions and to begin to consider how to develop standards that regulate each topic. This guidebook will address the intent, benefits, applicability, and a range of examples of objective design standards.

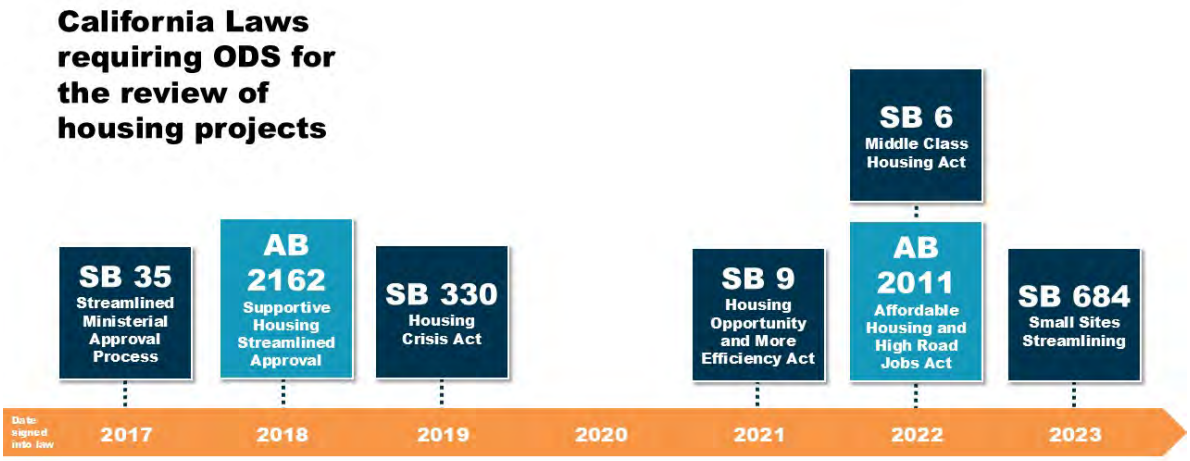
This guidebook is not a model set of design standards to be adopted by every jurisdiction, instead it allows each member jurisdiction to identify which topics are relevant for their communities and provides a clear framework for how to develop standards that regulate each topic. The design criteria are intended to provide both certainty and flexibility to project applicants while allowing for a diversity of project design and ease of review for City staff.

The example objective design standards included in this book follow current best practices for design and placemaking, and generally meet the following objectives:

- Emphasize high-quality, human-scaled building design and architectural elements.
- Promote thoughtful, context-sensitive site design.
- Maintain the livability of residential developments and enhance the character of the community.
- Encourage a multimodal environment with sustainable pedestrian, bike, transit, and auto connectivity.

1.2 Purpose and Benefits of Residential Objective Design Standards

Over the last several years, California state law has reduced the amount of discretion jurisdictions have to review housing projects undergoing streamlined review. These laws include SB 35, SB 330, AB2162, and AB 2011 among others. While some of these laws are specific to certain types of projects, such as SB9 which deals with single family lot splits and duplexes, this guidebook addresses the streamlining requirements for housing development projects (2 units or more).



Following the passage of California State Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) in 2019, jurisdictions may only apply adopted objectively written design and development standards in reviewing housing development projects, to ensure high-quality design and facilitate the efficient delivery of new residential units.

Design standards should contain concise, clear, and if possible, quantifiable language that are designed for consistent interpretation by applicants, reviewers, and approval bodies alike.

Providing this level of certainty and clarity introduces predictability in the review process. Together with other state requirements such as clear timelines for decisions to approve or deny a project and a limitation on the number of public meetings, the objective design standards are intended to streamline the approval process for housing units.

Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) defines objective design standards as any standard that: *"[Involves] no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and that is uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official before submittal of an application."* SB 330, Section 66300 (a).7

Conversely, design guidelines contain subjective criteria that require interpretation and may result in variability amongst individuals imposing their personal judgement. Jurisdictions may no longer adopt new subjective design guidelines for residential projects. Additionally, existing design guidelines (adopted before 2019) may not be used to deny or reduce the density of a residential development project.

1.3 Brief Overview of the Regional Context

Built Environment

San Joaquin Valley covers an eight-county region comprised of 70 communities with a diversity in population size and development patterns. However, most communities are similar in that most of the existing and new residential development is primarily in the form of single-family homes and subdivisions. Single family detached homes made up over 70% of the housing stock in 2022 (U.S. Census). Of the approximately 18% multi-family housing units, most are low to medium density garden style apartments with surface parking. Multiplex units and vertical mixed-use units are uncommon. When present, mixed-use units typically occur in downtown areas of larger cities within the region.

The housing shortage and lack of affordable housing is exacerbated by population growth in the region over the last two decades. While there is a shortage of available affordable units in the Valley, communities are starting to see more 100% affordable developments. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) are also becoming more commonplace and offer units that are affordable by design. Additionally, some cities are seeing more requests for the development of small lot single family homes. The SJVCOG recently published a Small-lot Planning Study[1] to investigate the feasibility of and encourage new small-lot housing development to help meet local housing needs.

[1] *SJV COG Small-lot Planning Study for the San Joaquin Valley, 2024*

Figure 1.1 Map of the eight counties comprising the San Joaquin Valley region

Objective Design Standards & Design Review

Currently, only a small number of jurisdictions have adopted Objective Design Standards in the San Joaquin Valley. Some jurisdictions have previously adopted subjective design guidelines, however, as noted earlier, projects requiring streamlining under state law cannot be required to meet subjectively written guidelines. The remaining jurisdictions' regulations are limited to basic development standards included in their zoning ordinances.

Of the fifteen jurisdictions that were surveyed for the preparation of this guidebook, there is not a "one size fits all" approach to their design review process. However, the common processes employed for design review in the region are summarized below:

Single-Family and Multi-Family Residential Projects

Ministerial review is the most common approach, which takes the form of one of the following two options:

1. Ministerial review at staff-level without any public hearings for all residential projects or projects under a certain number of units.
2. Ministerial review with a Design Review Committee, or other advisory body, providing a recommendation to staff.

Discretionary review is employed for projects over a certain number of units, with triggers varying greatly from over 5 to over 80 units.

Residential Subdivisions

Although subdivision tract maps typically do not require design review, jurisdictions surveyed for this guidebook have expressed a need to update their subdivision ordinances to comply with state law and incorporate objective development and design standards.

While the Subdivision Map Act mandates discretionary review for parcel and tract maps, Senate Bill 684 that came into effect in 2024, requires local agencies to ministerially approve, without discretionary review or a public hearing, parcel map or tentative and final maps for housing development projects of 10 or fewer residential units on urban lots of less than five acres. SB 684 further specifies that the proposed subdivision must be located on a parcel zoned for multifamily residential use, no larger than five acres, and substantially surrounded by qualified urban uses. SB 1123, which will be effective on July 1, 2025, extends eligibility to additional sites and provides more specific guidance on permitted densities and the applicability of the law to ADUs and JADUs.

Given the interest and need for jurisdictions to update their subdivision ordinances, this guidebook also offers best practices for incorporating objectively written design and development standards.

1.4 Housing Types Applicability

The Objective Design Standards apply to all residential development projects that qualify for streamlined non-discretionary processing, or are a "use by right" project, whereby no public hearings or discretionary approvals are required. These include:

- Single-family developments (more than one unit),
- Multi-family residential developments, and
- Mixed-use projects where at least two-thirds of the total square footage is residential.

Note that effective January 2025, State Assembly Bill 1893 lowers the two-thirds residential threshold referenced above to 50% residential for mixed-use projects with a minimum of 500 net new units, although mixed-use projects that include hotel rooms are excluded.

Projects that qualify for streamlining may choose to deviate from the objective design standards and would therefore be subject to discretionary approval.

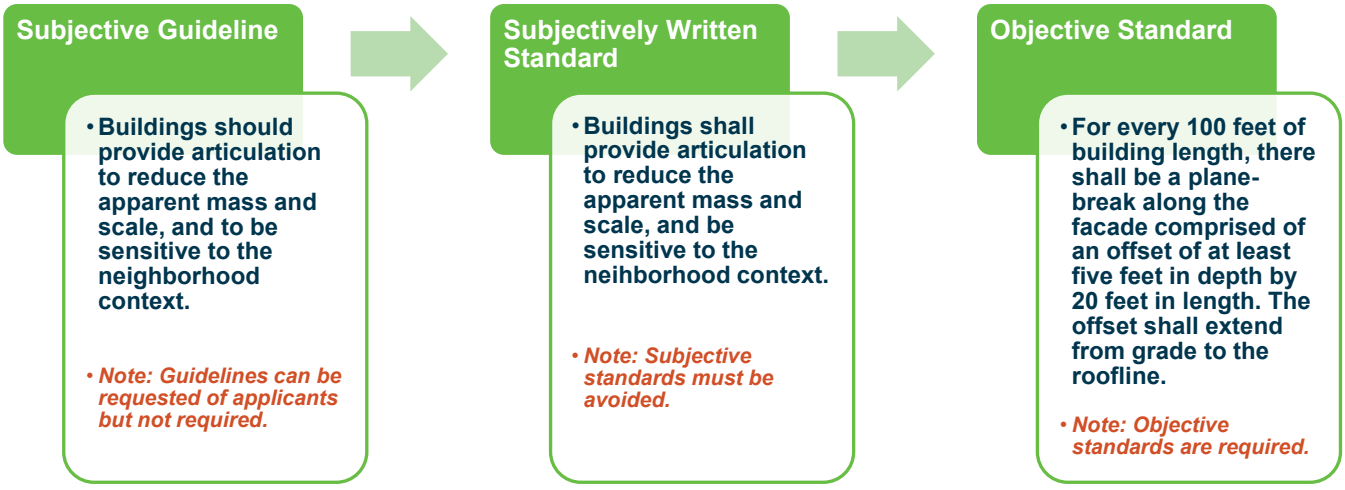
Though not all projects with residential units are subject to state requirements for objective design standards, jurisdictions may choose to apply objective design standards to those projects (e.g., mixed-use projects with only 25% residential), as this gives all residential projects the benefit of clear expectations and predictability in the design review process.

1.5 Approaches for Objective Design Standards

There are many approaches to create objective standards, and each strategy has its own strengths and weaknesses. There is not a "one-size fits all" strategy, and any objective design standard document may benefit from using a combination of one or more available strategies.

A direct rewrite of each guideline to a standard is not recommended as the effort is not a simple change from the word "should" to a "shall." Each term in the standard must be objectively written and uniformly verifiable, whereas many terms used in guidelines are broad and vague. In addition, standards tend to be more narrowly defined than guidelines, and it therefore usually takes more than one standard across a few topics or scales to meet the intent of a single existing guideline.

Available approaches to employ when crafting an objective design standards document are further described in this section.



Approach 1: Menu of Options

Providing a menu of options for how an applicant can meet the standard is beneficial in providing variety and flexibility. This approach encourages greater creativity as designers can select options to best meet the requirements and choose solutions that fit the context or goals of their specific project.

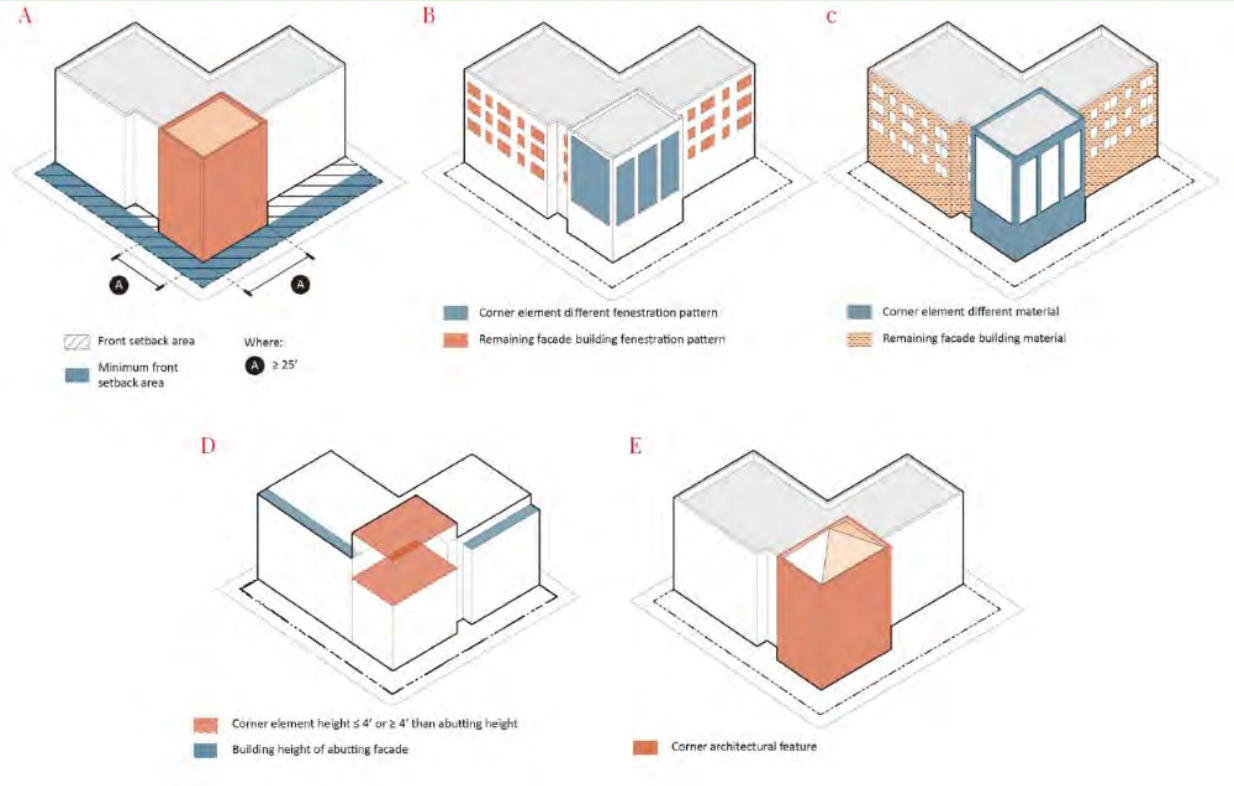
Pros & Cons

This approach allows for the greatest amount of flexibility while still providing certainty. However, it may not lend itself well to all design topics, so it is often combined with other approaches.

EXAMPLE STANDARD FOR MENU OF OPTIONS

Treatment of Corner Buildings. *Buildings located at street corners shall include* ***at least two*** *of the following corner treatments within 25 feet in each direction from the intersection corner and directed towards the intersection.*

- *Build-to Line. Build to minimum setbacks along both front and corner side of building.*
- *Change in Fenestration Pattern. A different fenestration pattern (size, shape, and/or orientation) than the rest of the facade.*
- *Change in Material. At minimum 50 percent of the corner area uses a different material than the rest of the building/facade.*
- *Change in Height. A change in total height of at least four feet greater or less than the height of the abutting primary facade.*
- *Special Architectural Feature. A special architectural feature such as a rounded or cut corner, tower/cupola, or similar. The feature shall extend the full height of the building for buildings up to two stories and must match at least half the building height for buildings over two stories.*



Approach 2: Numerical Standards

Using counts and measurements provides a straightforward and precise method for structuring objective design standards, particularly when those standards rely on minimums, maximums, or defined ranges. Counts indicate the number of specific elements, while measurements define the dimensions or scale of design features.

Pros & Cons

This approach provides the most consistency as the benchmarks are all predetermined. However, it may limit design flexibility and creativity and may not account for unique characteristics of a particular project. In addition, it may encourage designs that only satisfy the minimum criteria rather than striving for higher quality or more innovative solutions.

EXAMPLE NUMERICAL STANDARD

Common Outdoor Space. *Common Outdoor Space shall meet the following standards:*

- *Common outdoor space shall be a minimum of 20 feet in any one direction.*
- *A minimum of 20 percent of the outdoor space shall be planted with trees, ground cover, and/or shrubs.*

Approach 3: Point-Based

This approach involves a point system for positive attributes with a minimum threshold needed to establish compliance. Point thresholds can be calculated for each topic area, and more important, desirable and/or costly elements can be weighted with higher point values.

Pros & Cons

While this approach allows communities to calibrate the importance of standards to their community, it can be complicated to set up with considerable discretion involved in how to allocate points, keeping in mind cost considerations. In addition, designers may focus more on achieving points rather than ensuring overall design quality.

EXAMPLE POINT-BASED STANDARD

The Landscape Area must provide a total of at least 30 points per 10 square feet, on average, of landscaping according to the table shown below:

Plant Type	Plant Container Size/Metric	Points
Shrub	5-gallon	3
Shrub	15-gallon	10
Tree	5-gallon	5
Tree	15-gallon	10
Tree	24-inch box	25
Native or Drought Tolerant	100% of landscape area is native or drought tolerant	5

Approach 4: Checklist

The checklist approach focuses on creating a clear, structured list of items to be reviewed and verified during the design process. Each item on the checklist represents a specific standard, and the design is evaluated against each one. It reduces complexity by breaking down requirements into discrete actionable items. This method provides a systematic, easy-to-follow framework for assessing whether all necessary aspects of the design meet the established standards.

Pros & Cons

While this approach is straightforward and consistent, it can be challenging as many design elements are complex and may not be fully captured by a simple checklist item. This may result in over-simplification of the standards and the inability to include graphics and diagrams. Therefore, many communities prepare a simplified checklist in addition to the set of standards as a supplementary administrative tool for verification purposes only. This type of checklist provides references to the complete set of standards for the full standard language.

EXAMPLE CHECKLIST STANDARD

18.24.020 Public Realm/Sidewalk Character

Check	Standard	Sheet #	Applicant's Justification
(b)(1) Sidewalk Widths			
☐	(A) In the following districts, public sidewalk width (curb to back of walk) is at least: • Commercial Mixed-Use District: CN, CS, CC, CC(2), CD-C, CD-S, CD-N, PTOD: **10 ft** • El Camino Real: **12 ft** • San Antonio Road, from Middlefield Road to East Charleston Road: **12 ft** And consists of:		
	Pedestrian clear path width of 8 foot minimum: _____ feet		
	Landscape or furniture area width of 2 foot minimum: _____ feet		
☐	If the existing public sidewalk does not meet the minimum standard, a publicly accessible extension of the sidewalk, with corresponding public access easement, shall be provided.		
☐	(B) Public sidewalks or walkways connecting through a development parcel (e.g. on a through lot with a public access easement, leading to a commercial entry) must be at least 6 feet wide.		
☐	(C) The width of walkways designed to provide bicycle access (e.g. pathway to bike racks/lockers) must be at least 12 feet wide, consisting of:		
	Pedestrian clear path width (8 feet min.): ____ ft		
	Clear space/buffer – (2 feet min. on each side of path, ground cover is allowed): ____ ft & ____ ft		

Source: City of Palo Alto

EXAMPLE CHECKLIST AS SUPPLEMENTARY ADMINISTRATIVE TOOL FOR VERIFICATION PURPOSES

DRSGs Pg	DRSGs ID	Design Standard Description	Does Your Project Meet the Following Standards? (*For Applicants*): Explain your selection in the spaces provided below. For each standard include plan set and page reference number.			Compliance Evaluation (*For City Staff*)		
8.1 ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY								
72	8.1 S-1	Private Street Placement	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
72	8.1 S-2	Turnaround Areas	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
72	8.1 S-3	Gated Developments	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
72	8.1 S-4	Pedestrian Pathways	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A

There are also optional guidelines related to this chapter. Please let us know if there are any guidelines that you have chosen to incorporate into your project by checking the appropriate box(es).

☐ [8.1 G-1] External Connectivity ☐ [8.1 G-3] Private Streets
☐ [8.1 G-2] Curb Cuts and On-Street Parking

Source: City of Walnut Creek

1.6 Best Practices and Considerations

Best Practices for Effective Objective Design Standards

The following best practices provide guidance for how to organize the information and make the objective design standards more effective.

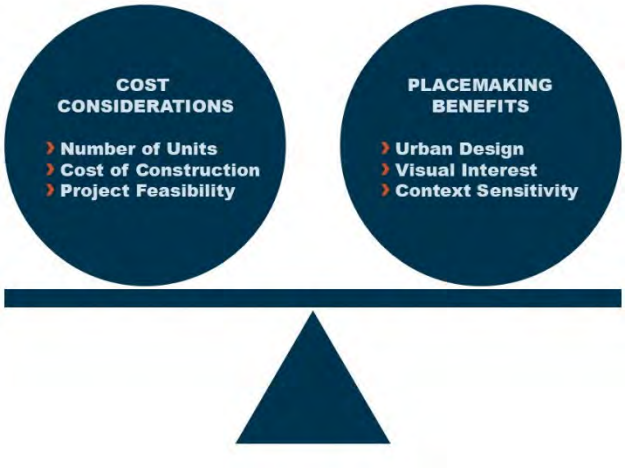
- Use **clear and simple language** that can be universally understood. Avoid jargon and technical terms or define them.
- Create categories of similar design topics and **group similar standards** together.
- Use a **statement of intent** at the start of each section to **clarify the purpose and goals** of standards. This can also provide a basis for any deviations from the standards that might be used through a discretionary review process.
- Use **tables or lists** to organize design criteria where possible.
- Use **graphics to illustrate** standards. Diagrams to illustrate how standards are applied help to communicate the intent of the standards.

Other Considerations

- Consider including optional guidelines in addition to the required standards to help communicate additional subjective design preferences. Though applicants cannot be required to meet a guideline, the City can request the guidelines be met, particularly as part of a discretionary process. They can also be used to set a higher bar for design quality if the City opts to provide “incentives” to a project if these are met.
- Consider allowing minor deviations to the objective design standards to allow flexibility for small adjustments based on unique site conditions. Parameters for these deviations must be very clearly articulated as well as the process by which staff can approve these deviations.
- Consider the burden of proof when drafting standards. The burden of proof rests on each agency. When an agency finds that a project does not meet a standard, it must provide evidence before it can deny a project. Therefore, it is critical that each standard is defensible and objectively written.

1.7 Cost Factors[2]

Design standards are essential tools that cities use to ensure buildings are of high quality, safe, and visually appealing. However, even the clearest and most objective standards can add costs and complexity to projects. If these standards are too restrictive or numerous, they can drive up housing costs or even prevent projects before they start. Therefore, regulating design is a delicate balancing act between maximizing placemaking, enhancing overall neighborhood value, and managing project costs. Planners must carefully consider how specific design standards could increase housing costs or impact project feasibility. Objective design standards are intended to encourage the creation of high-quality, visually appealing buildings that benefit not only the project's residents but also the surrounding neighborhood. Hence, when implementing new design standards, jurisdictions should weigh the impact on project costs against the value created for both specific projects and the surrounding neighborhood.



ABAG's ***Objective Design Standards Handbook for Residential and Mixed-Use Projects*** published in April 2024 discusses this balance and tradeoff between costs and value creation in greater detail. *Section 1.2 Economic Implications of Objective Design Standards* of this document provides important information for planners. The document also includes comparative impacts on costs of a range of design standards.

[2] *Objective Design Standards Handbook for Residential and Mixed-Use Projects, April 2024*

1.8 Design Review Processes

There are several options for the design review process for projects requiring Objective Design Standards, based on the project's compliance and complexity. Below are the various review process options that can be utilized, which all meet the State requirements for a streamlined review process under SB330.

Option 1: Staff Level Approval – Meets All Objective Standards

This process is the simplest and most straightforward. Projects that fully meet all the established Objective Design Standards are approved by staff without the need for additional review or hearings. This approach is efficient, as it ensures projects that comply with the set criteria are swiftly processed, reducing administrative burden, and promoting consistency.

Note that SB35 affordable housing projects are required to be reviewed and approved ministerially without discretion pursuant to state law. See the inset box for more information on the distinction between SB35 and SB330.

Option 2: Staff Level Approval – With Exceptions

In this process, projects meet most of the Objective Design Standards but may require minor exceptions. The project must still adhere to the overarching design intent statements. Before this process can take place, the City must first adopt clear parameters and limits that define when exceptions can be granted. These parameters are applied consistently to all projects seeking deviations, ensuring objectivity, transparency, and fairness in the review process.

Once the parameters are established, staff will evaluate the project to determine whether the proposed deviations are within the set parameters and make findings to demonstrate that the alternative design elements align with the intent of the standards. This approach allows for some flexibility while maintaining the overall objectives of the design standards.

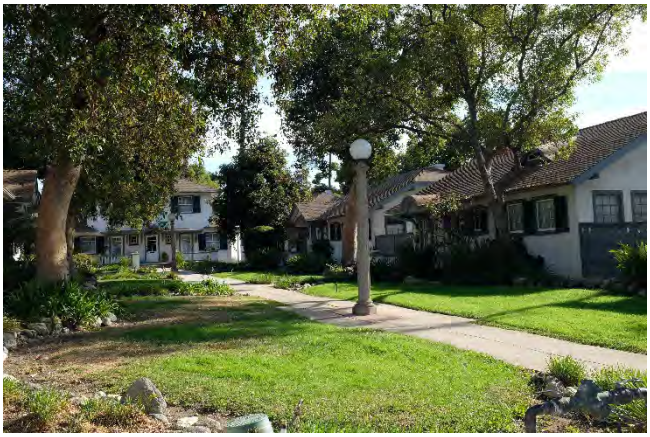
APPROVAL PROCESSES PER STATE LAW

Ministerial Design Review Process
Affordable housing projects that qualify for streamlined ministerial design review under state law, including SB35, must be approved ministerially without discretion pursuant to applicable state laws. Projects are evaluated based on their compliance with objective standards (e.g., design and development standards, Zoning, and General Plan). Public hearings are prohibited as part of the approval process.

Note that per SB684, tract maps for a housing development project of 10 or fewer residential units on urban lots under five acres must also be ministerially approved without discretionary review at a hearing.

Streamlined Design Review Process
California State Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) streamlines housing development processes by imposing timelines on the approval of housing projects, limits the number of public hearings to 5, and limits denial of projects to non-compliance with objectively written standards.

An example of how this approach can be applied is as follows: A project may be required to meet at least 90% of the standards (e.g., 90 out of 100 standards). In addition to or instead of this minimum threshold, the City may allow each individual standard to deviate within a certain percentage. For instance, if a standard requires a minimum dimension of 20 feet, a project could be permitted to provide a dimension of 18 feet, which represents a 10% deviation. This approach is particularly effective when the standards are numerical, as it provides a clear and objective framework for evaluating deviations while maintaining consistency.



Option 3: Design Review Committee Review and Approval

This approach involves an additional level of review whereby projects are evaluated against both the Objective Design Standards and the broader design guidelines to determine if the overall intent of the standards is met. If a project adheres to the standards, it must be approved. However, it provides an opportunity for the public review body, — which could be a Design Review Committee or Planning Commission — to assess the project holistically while ensuring it aligns with the intent of the standards.

This review option includes a limit of five hearings, encouraging efficiency and reducing potential delays in the approval process.

Cities can also choose a hybrid of the last two approaches, whereby it is Design Review Committee Review and Approval – with Exceptions, and its staff that does the initial review and the Design Review Committee or Planning Commission Review is then limited only to any deviations. Similarly, findings should be made to demonstrate that the project deviations align with the intent of the standards.

In either case, the Design Review Committee can function as the approval body, or an advisory body to staff.

Option 4: Discretionary Design Review

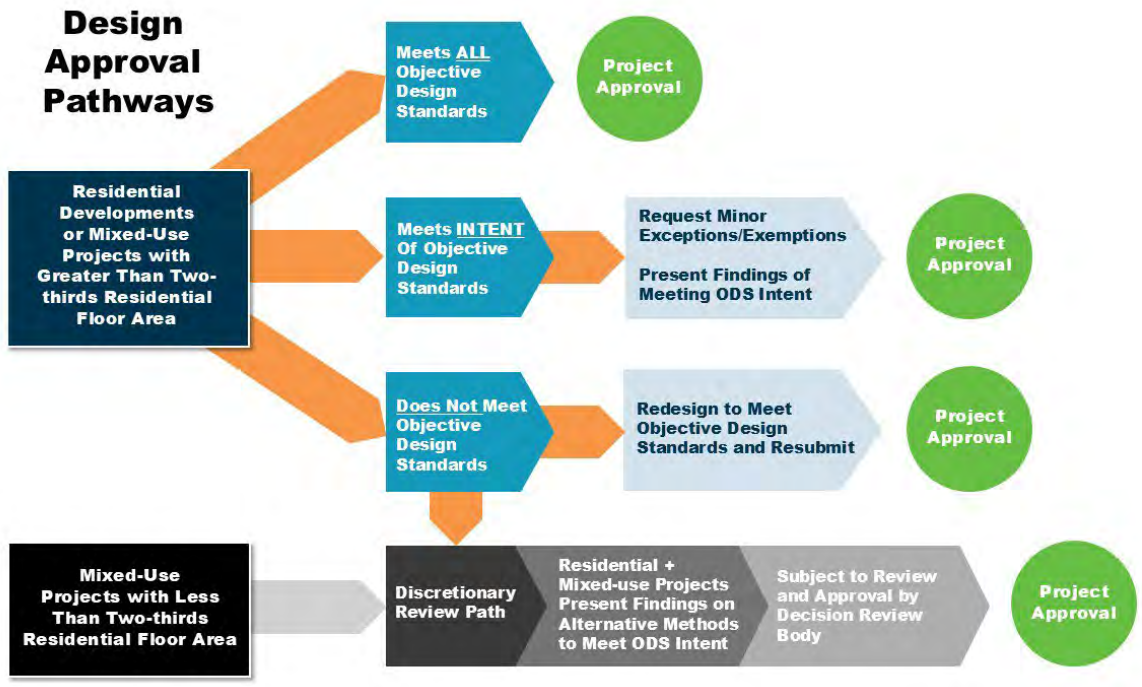
The discretionary review process is applied to projects that do not meet or choose not to meet the objective standards, or projects that require additional legislative approvals, such as a Tract Map of more than 10 units, General Plan amendment, or Zoning amendment. Projects that are pursuing a Planned Development permit or preparation of a Master Plan/Specific Plan, also would undergo discretionary review.

In these cases, there is greater flexibility and discretion in how the Objective Design Standards are applied. The design review committee or decision-making body has more leeway in interpreting the standards and making decisions based on factors such as site context, overall design quality, and specific project needs. Similar to the process for allowing exceptions, described above, findings are made to demonstrate that any alternative design elements meet the intent of the standards. This process may involve a more detailed review and often requires additional public hearings and stakeholder involvement.

Example Design Approval Pathways

Below is an example of a design approval pathway for projects that do not require any legislative action and comply with the Zoning and General Plan.

Figure 1.2 Example Design Approval Pathway for projects in compliance with the Zoning and General Plan



1.9 Options for Adoption

One final consideration when selecting your approach is to consider how the document will be adopted. There are two options for how to adopt your City's Objective Design Standards: they can be adopted as part of a zoning code (ordinance) or can be adopted as a stand-alone document (by resolution or ordinance). Depending on any graphic limitations to your zoning code template, a stand-alone document may be more flexible in its formatting and ability to amend in the future. Chapter 3 provides additional information about these options.

Chapter 2
Objective Design Standards Topics


Source: Modesto Bee

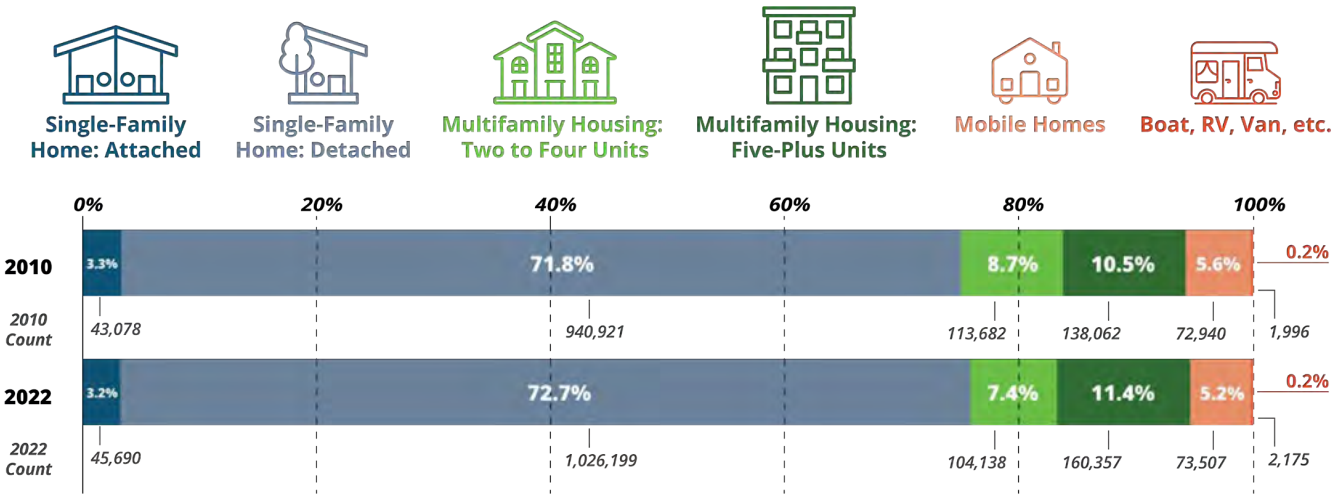
2.1 Single-Family Residential and Missing Middle Housing Types

This Chapter provides guidance on design topics and standards for subdivisions, single family residential and "missing middle" housing type developments.

More than 75% of new housing in the San Joaquin Valley is single-family housing (both attached and detached) in new subdivisions.[1] As such, the design of new subdivisions is of paramount importance to cities as they continue to grow and build new housing. While discretionary approvals are needed for subdivision parcel tract maps (more than 10 units), cities can provide best practices and design guidance for consideration during the approval process.

Each of the topic areas listed below includes a description of intent, high level guidance, and provides examples of objective standards that address the topic.

Figure 1. Housing Type Trends (2010-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 06-10, 18-22 (5-year Estimates), Table B25024.

[1] *Small Lot Planning Study for the San Joaquin Valley, 2024*

2.1.1 Subdivision Design and Circulation

Overview

The design of subdivisions plays a significant role in how new development fits within its surrounding context and helps create livable, vibrant, and walkable neighborhoods. The street layout, access and connectivity to open space and community facilities, a continuous street tree canopy, and a variety of housing types and styles all contribute to creating desirable residential neighborhoods. This section provides guidance on best practices for subdivision design including street layout, connectivity, and sustainable design features.

A. SUBDIVISION DESIGN

Intent

To design walkable residential neighborhoods that improve livability, create safe and active communities, and reduce dependence on the automobile for daily tasks.

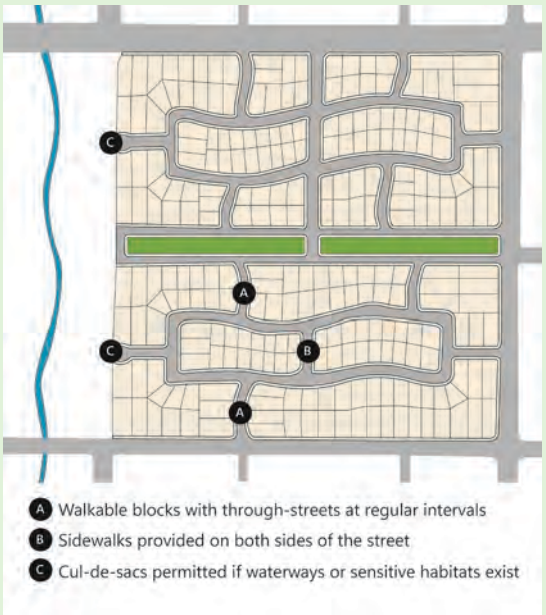
Best Practices

Block Size and Connectivity

- Design the street network to be well connected with walkable blocks – no greater than 400 to 600 feet, the size of a typically walkable block. The maximum block perimeter should be 3,200 feet. Intersection density or block size is one of the key metrics which governs walkability.
- Consider larger blocks or dead-end streets only where the preservation of natural elements such as waterways, hills, or sensitive habitats requires otherwise.
- Avoid cul-de-sacs as these limit direct and efficient access. These may be permitted to protect sensitive habitats or other natural features.
- To the extent feasible, align streets within any proposed subdivision with existing and planned streets adjacent to the site to create a continuous street network.
- Connect tot-lots and mini-parks, city parks, and regional open space resources with trails, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian pathways to allow greater access to available resources.

EXAMPLE

External connectivity. *All streets in any subdivision or development site shall connect to and be aligned with existing and planned streets outside the proposed subdivision or development to the extent feasible. Any cul-de-sac or other dead-end street longer than 400 feet shall be connected to other streets by a pedestrian path.*



B. STREET DESIGN

Intent

To design streets that meet the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and those needing access accommodations, and contribute to vibrant and active neighborhoods.

Best Practices

- Follow "Complete Streets" principles in the design of new streets in subdivisions.
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of the street to allow for pedestrian safety and walkability.
- Plant a combination of trees and other plants in a minimum of four-foot-wide planting strip along all new streets and pathways. Require shrubs and ground cover to cover at least 30 percent of the planting strip.
- Plant trees at a minimum of one tree for every 30 to 45 feet of linear street/path (depending on the species and mature canopy width or growth habit).
- To meet the jurisdiction's Low Impact Development (LID) requirements, incorporate bioswales or similar features for stormwater capture in the street design to limit negative impacts on water quality.

C. SOLAR ORIENTATION

Intent

To address climate impacts in the San Joaquin Valley. The climate is hot and dry in the summer with higher cooling costs on average compared to other parts of the state. As such, new subdivisions should be designed to reduce passive solar heat gain as much as possible. Orientation of the street network, provision of street trees, and window placement all can provide environmental benefits.

Guidance/Best Practices

- Orient and design homes to block as much passive solar heat gain as possible. For a gridded subdivision layout, orienting the grid to a 45-degree angle from a north-south orientation allows sunlight to penetrate the neighborhood at times of the day when most needed. For example, during the summer when the sun is higher in the sky, shade extends into every street all day long, creating a more comfortable environment, except for short periods during mid-morning and mid-afternoon.
- Minimize glazing on east and west sides where solar heat gain is less controllable by shading devices.
- Consider requiring shade street trees on both sides of the street. Street trees provide shade and help reduce the impact of "urban heat island" effect. Neighborhoods with established street tree canopies[2] also benefit from other environmental and economic benefits such as increased property values, and lowered crime rates.

EXAMPLE

Private Street and Pathway Landscaping. *All private streets and pathways shall provide a combination of trees and other plants in a planting buffer strip. Trees shall be a minimum 24-inch box size and shall be planted at a minimum of one tree for every 30-40 feet of linear street/path (depending on the species and mature canopy width or growth habit). Shrubs and groundcover shall cover at least 30 percent of the planting buffer strip.*

[2] *https://canopy.org/tree-info/benefits-of-trees/*

D. HABITAT AND TREE PRESERVATION

Intent

To maintain the sensitive ecosystem of the San Joaquin Valley by preserving sensitive natural resources such as waterways, wetlands, native vegetation, and mature trees. Preserving these natural resources can contribute to the region's environmental goals as well as provide unique elements within new subdivisions.

Best Practices

- Preserve mature and healthy trees to allow for shading within the subdivision.
- Preserve sensitive habitats and natural resources such as waterways, wetlands, etc.

EXAMPLE

Tree Preservation. *Existing mature trees of six inches or greater in diameter at breast height (DBH) shall be preserved unless infeasible. Existing trees having a DBH of less than six inches should be relocated unless infeasible.*

2.1.2 Building Design

Overview

The design of single-family residential homes and “house form” residential uses is critical to creating residential neighborhoods that support a mix of housing types and sizes, provide options at multiple price points, and contribute positively to the character of the neighborhood and walkable streetscape.

In 2010, architect Daniel Parolek coined the term “missing middle” to define the smaller, multi-family or clustered housing types that have been missing from most cities’ neighborhood patterns since World War II, as postwar housing development focused on single-family housing and larger multifamily types. “Missing middle” housing types include duplex, triplex, cottage, courtyard, rowhouse, and other smaller multi-unit attached and detached housing. These are similar in form to a single-family home “house form” with multiple units in what looks like a single house-form building. Zoning codes in the last seventy years have mostly prevented these housing types from being built as a result of incompatible development standards.

Given that over 75% of the housing in the San Joaquin Valley is single-family (attached or detached), the demand for new housing is focused on the single-family housing type. However, increased housing costs, demand for smaller dwellings, desire for walkable urban living, and changes in shifting demographics, all have led to renewed interest in considering these “house form” housing types.

A. “MISSING MIDDLE” HOUSING TYPES

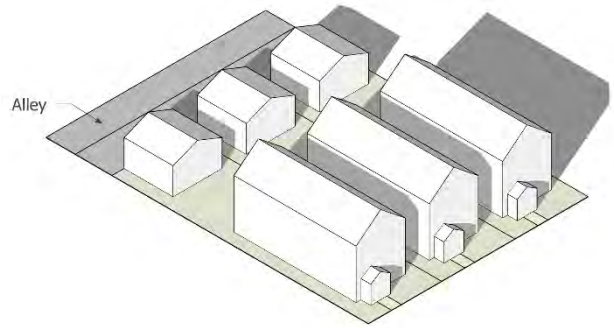
This section describes the “missing middle” housing types that can contribute to additional housing units that offer affordability, variety and address the needs of a range of demographic populations. Many jurisdictions will need to evaluate their zoning regulations to ensure that these housing types can be built. Zoning considerations include:

1. Maximum density
2. Minimum lot size
3. Lot coverage requirements
4. Required number of parking spaces
5. Covered parking requirements
6. Setback standards

Small-lot Detached Housing

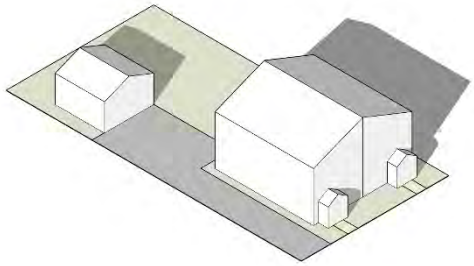
These are homes on individual lots that are significantly smaller than the typical 6,000 square foot lot size. A small-lot parcel may range from 2,000 to 4,000 square feet in size. Recent state legislation also makes it easier for this housing type to be approved in urban infill locations. SB 684 (2024) requires local agencies to ministerially consider a parcel map or tentative and final tract map for a housing development project of 10 or fewer residential units.

The Small-lot Planning Study for the San Joaquin Valley, completed in October 2024 provides an overview of this housing type including projected demand, feasibility studies, and considerations for development regulations for this housing type.



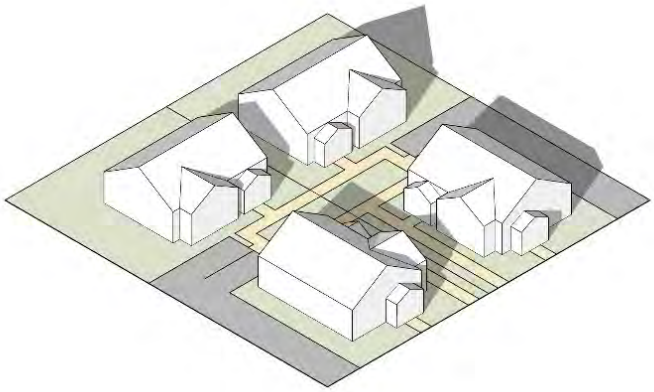
Duplexes, Triplexes and Quadplexes

These multiple unit building types usually take the form of a single-family house in scale and character but contain two to four units. Some are designed with separate entries for each ground floor unit with upper floor units accessed through a shared hall and stairway.



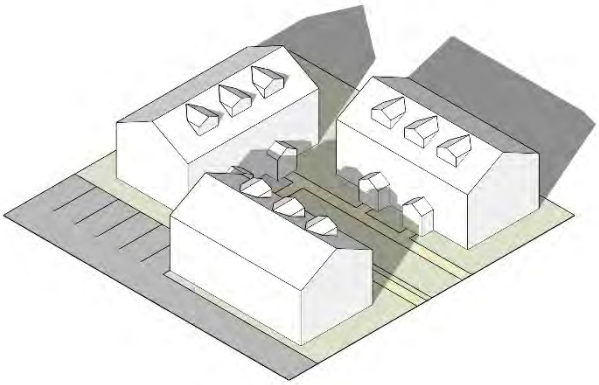
Cottage Clusters

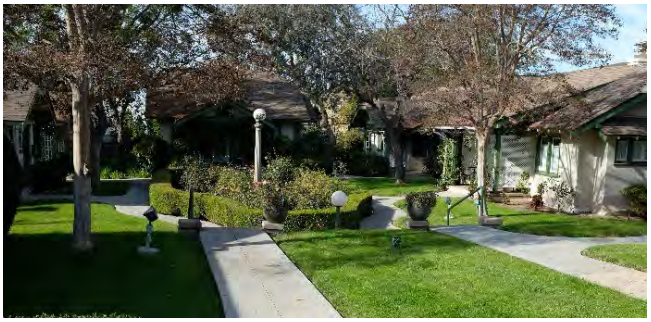
Cottage clusters are detached small homes clustered around shared open space where most units face the common open space. One or more units may be on separate lots, or all the units may be on a single lot. Combining two standard lots is often needed to create a cottage cluster. Off-street parking, when provided, is often shared. Typical clusters are limited to 10-12 units. These units are often smaller in size, typically 800-1,200 square feet.



Courtyard Housing

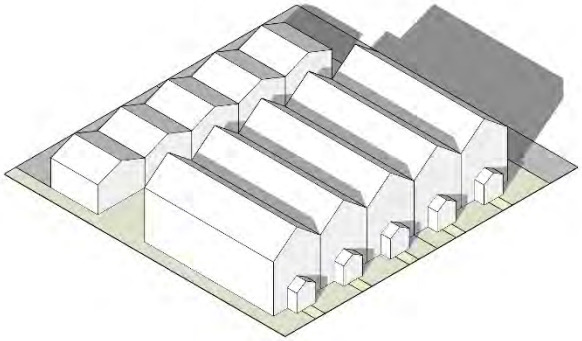
Courtyard homes are small attached single-family homes clustered around a shared courtyard that directly connects to the public sidewalk. The “end” units that face the street are designed to face the street or at the very least have additional detailing, porches, windows, and articulation. Combining two standard lots is often needed to allow this housing type to be built.

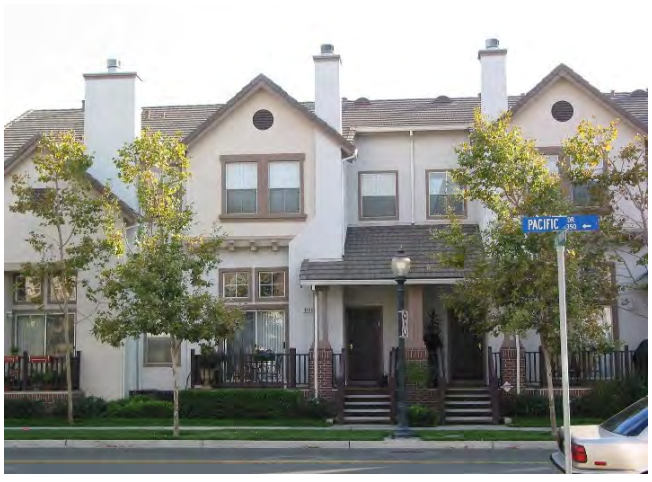




Rowhouses/Townhomes

This is a form of attached single-family housing of three or more attached units that share common walls with private open space for each unit and individual entrances from the public sidewalk and street. These units can be owned as fee-simple properties or structured as condominiums, depending on the development model and ownership arrangement.





B. BUILDING ELEMENTS

This section provides guidance on topics related to the design of entries, garages, windows, privacy concerns, and materials.

Intent

To design single-family homes to have human-scaled elements, present an active frontage to the street, and consider adjacency and privacy issues.

Best Practices

Entries and Weather Protection

Orienting the primary entry on the front façade of a house to the street creates a connection to the street and the neighborhood. This also provides "eyes on the street" in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policies. Considerations should include:

- Locate the primary entry/front door on the front façade, oriented to the street. If a side entry is necessary, it should be visible from the public sidewalk and be located closer to the front property line than a garage façade.
- Provide weather protection in the form of building recess, roof projection, covered porch, or a combination of these methods for the front door/entry.
- Establish requirements for the porch size; typically, 5 feet wide and a minimum of 30 square feet.

EXAMPLE

Weather Protection. *Primary entries shall have a roofed projection (such as a porch) or recess that is a minimum four feet wide and four feet deep by recessing the entry or using a combination of these methods (not including primary roof overhang).*

Garages

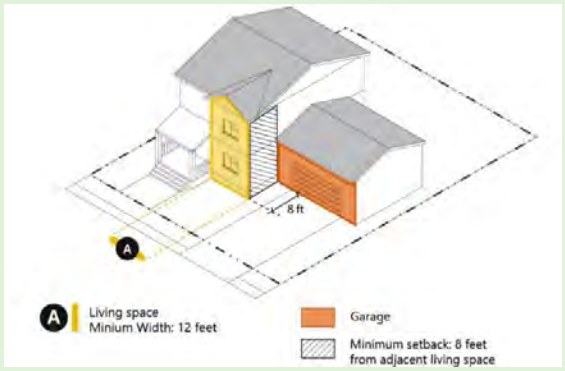
Garages are a dominant feature of most single-family neighborhoods. Design standards can be used to diminish the visual impact of unappealing garages on the street environment by encouraging alley access to garages where feasible, requiring the garage volume to set further away from the street frontage than adjacent living spaces, encouraging side-facing garages to reduce view of garage doors, and limiting the width of garages.

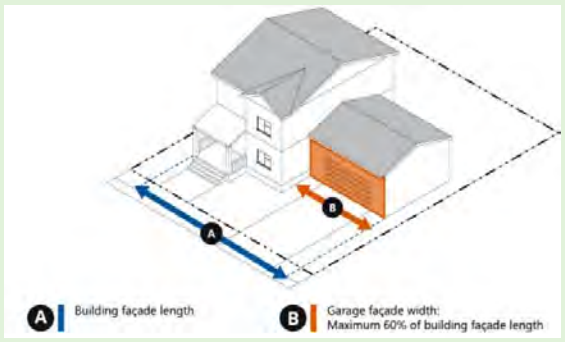
- Where possible, encourage alley access for garages. This requirement reduces not only the visual impacts of garage doors but also the amount of driveway paving.
- For new detached single-family homes with front-loading garages, set back front-loaded garages a minimum of five to eight feet behind the front façade or adjacent living space.
- Consider limiting the allowed maximum width of the garage along the front façade. The maximum width will vary based on the lot width and setbacks. On a typical 50 feet wide lot, the maximum width could be 60% but may need to be higher on narrower lots.
- Integrate the visual appearance of garages with the primary structure. Design garage structures (both attached and detached) using at least two of the same exterior finish materials and/or colors used on the primary structure.

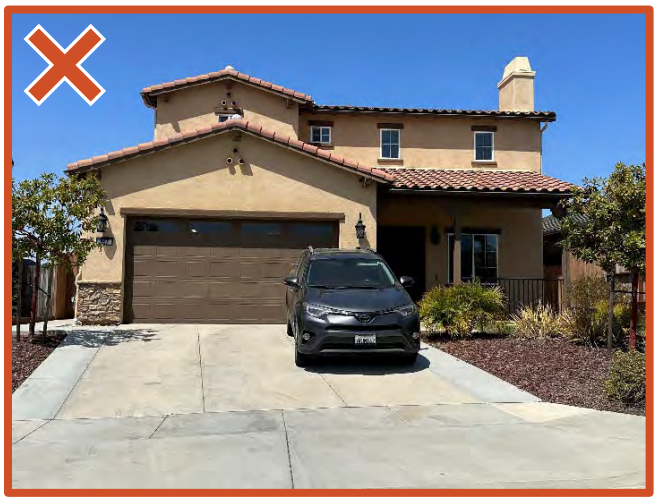
EXAMPLE

Individual garages (attached or detached) for single-family and multiplex buildings shall follow the following standards:

- *Garage spaces shall be a minimum of 8 feet behind an adjacent living space.*
- *The adjacent living space shall have a minimum width of 12 feet.*
- *Garage façade width shall not exceed more than 60% of the primary building façade length.*
- *Garages doors that are oriented toward the street shall have a maximum width of 20 feet (a typical side by side two-car garage)*
- *Single car garages shall have garage door opening widths between 9 and 10 feet.*
- *Only one driveway curb cut shall be permitted for lots which have a street front width of 65 feet or less.*
- *Garage openings facing the street should be horizontally aligned to the driveways. Any horizontal offset from the center of the street curb cut for the lot to the center of the garage door opening shall be no more than 3 feet.*







Windows

Windows are important design features that enhance the visual appeal of a home's exterior, convey design quality, and provide light, ventilation, and views. As such, regulating the design of windows can be a useful way to offer a visually appealing high-quality residence. While there are cost factors to consider regarding some of the design standards, the benefits may outweigh the costs. Standards to consider include:

- Require that window (and door) type, shape, material, and proportion be related to the architectural style of the home.
- As allowed by the architectural style, require that windows be inset from the building walls to create shadow line and detail. This is singularly the most important design standard that affects the visual appearance of windows. The minimum inset should be 3 inches, and deeper insets should be provided for stucco or masonry walls.
- Consider restricting vinyl windows.

EXAMPLE

Window Recess/Trim. *Windows shall be recessed at least three inches from the plane of the surrounding exterior wall or shall provide a combination of trim and recess with a minimum one-inch recess.*

Vinyl windows that are flush with the façade are not recommended.

Vinyl windows with trim have a more robust appearance and are preferred.

Recessed windows add shadows and detail conveying high-quality to the overall appearance and are recommended.

Roofs

Elements of a roof include shape, slope, and material, and correspond to the home's architectural style. Refer to the Architectural Style Guidelines in Appendix A for reference. Other considerations include Cool Roofs, eave overhangs and materials.

- Allow gable, hipped, flat, curved or shed roof forms.
- Encourage all residential structures with sloping roofs to have eave overhangs of not less than 12 inches measured from the vertical side of the residential structure unless overhangs are incompatible with the architectural style of the structure.
- Require roofing material types to be consistent with the architectural style of the structure.
- Establish minimum standards for asphalt shingles, if used, as high-definition 'dimensional' shingles which provide texture and shadow.
- Prohibit rolled roofing materials except on flat roofs surrounded by parapets on all sides.
- Require rooftop mechanical equipment to be screened from view.

Materials and Colors

The use of high-quality, durable exterior materials is an important element of building design for both aesthetics and to minimize future maintenance issues. Harmony and continuity of design can be ensured by coordinating exterior building design and details on all elevations regarding color, types of materials, number of materials, architectural form, and detailing. Considerations for material standards include:

- Require a minimum number of materials. Enforcing a material hierarchy with primary (minimum 50% of a facade), secondary (15-30% of a façade) and accent (5-10% of a facade) materials.
- Provide a list of prohibited materials or limitations on specific types of materials.
- Consider requiring accessory structures to incorporate the same finishes, exterior colors, and materials as the main residential structure(s). Additionally, require that accessory structures reflect the main structure's architectural style and details through the inclusion of at least one of the main structure's exterior architectural forms or detailing elements.
- Paint all vents, flashing, and electrical conduits the same color as the adjacent surface unless reflective of an architectural style. Paint gutters and downspouts either the same color as the adjacent surface or be entirely an unpainted decorative gutter material (e.g., copper).

Adjacency and Privacy

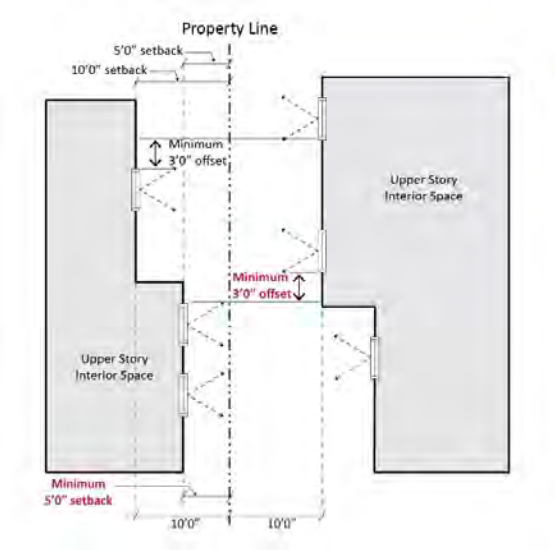
As the average lot size for new homes decreases, issues such as privacy between residences become more important. Community concerns are often tied to the privacy of backyards, views from windows and balconies on adjacent properties, and effects of taller buildings on access to sunlight. Considerations related to this topic include:

- Design side-facing facades such that windows do not directly face into the windows of the neighboring home. Consider a minimum offset for windows, typically 3 feet, from homes on adjacent properties.
- Orient balconies to the front or rear of a home. Limit balconies on side facades facing adjacent properties unless that façade is a minimum of 20 feet away from the shared property line.
- For ground floor privacy, encourage the use of fences, landscaping such as hedges and shrubs.

EXAMPLE

***Window Placement**. When a new home is located within 10 feet of a side property line, upper floor windows on the building shall be oriented to avoid a direct line of sight into adjacent residential buildings or property.*

- *Windows shall be offset a minimum of three feet horizontally from windows of the nearest residential building on the adjacent property to maximize privacy. (See diagram below).*
- *If a new building is located within five feet of a side property line, windows shall be offset a minimum of five feet horizontally from windows of the nearest residential building on the adjacent property to maximize privacy.*
- *Windows on any floor to a non-habitable room such as a bathroom or closet may be excepted from this standard if both the following conditions are met:*
- *The minimum windowsill height is five feet.*
- *The window has frosted or privacy glass.*
- *This standard shall be waived if there is a conflict with any Building Code requirements.*



Architectural Variability for Subdivisions

To encourage variety in the streetscape environment, it is important to encourage architectural variability in the design of the homes being built. The variation can be provided in a variety of ways – from requiring different architectural styles to mandating a minimum number of façade design elements and floor plans. Standards to consider include:

- Require architectural façade variability if a subdivision includes more than 4 lots. Provide minimum number of architectural façade designs needed based on total number of lots. For example, a subdivision with 30 homes should have 5-8 façade options.
- Do not place more than two buildings with the same front facade design on the same side of the street within a single block. Do not locate two matching buildings on abutting lots.
- Identify the features that count towards architectural variability:
  - Roof form
  - Building Entry/Porches/Patios/Balconies. A variation in location, dimensions, or type of entry (Front Entry, Porch Entry, Side Entry, Entry through patio).
  - Variation in type, size, and/or depth of massing projection
  - Variation in design pattern, material, dimension, or shape of railings, decorative trim, and decorative window elements
- While color alone should not count as a variability feature, consider requiring one distinct exterior color palette per a minimum of every four units.

EXAMPLE

Architectural Facade Variability. *For all developments involving four or more contiguous lots, there shall be multiple "distinctly different" front facade designs. No more than two houses shall be of the same front facade design as any other house directly adjacent along the same block face and side of the street. The number of required different front facade designs shall be in accordance with the Table below. "Distinctly different" shall mean that a single-family dwelling's elevation must differ from other house elevations in the following.*

- *Number of stories (optional);*
- *Modulation strategies - at least one.*
- *Articulation strategies - at least one; and,*
- *Variation in materials - different material palette, with a different primary material.*

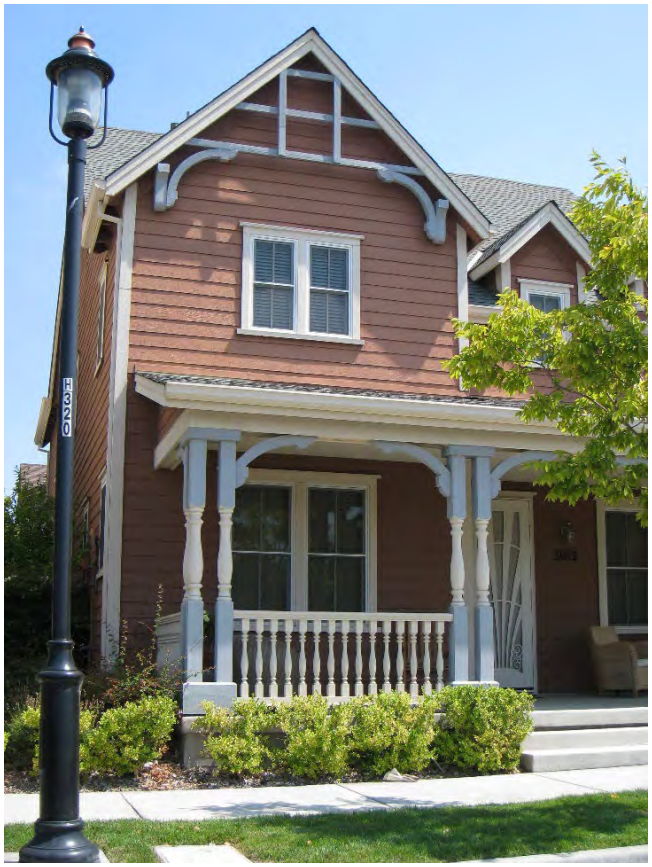
Total number of Dwelling Units	Minimum Number of Facade Designs
6 – 12	2
13 - 20	3
21 – 40	4
41 – 60	5
>60	6

Architectural Styles

The San Joaquin Valley is demographically diverse with a variety of prevalent architectural styles for single-family residential homes. This rich diversity can be a significant resource for architectural elements and design of homes. Cities should strongly encourage new housing to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the communities which will help to enhance each community's unique identity and distinguish it from neighboring communities. New homes should be designed using elements that are authentic to whichever architectural style is selected regarding building form, detailing and decorative features, colors, materials, etc. while adhering to the standards in the Objective Design Standards document.

Appendix A includes an Architectural Style Guide that describes the character-defining features of several common architectural styles. These styles include:

- Craftsman
- Spanish Revival
- Mid-Century/Ranch
- Victorian
- Modern Farmhouse



2.1.3 Site Design and Elements

Overview

Site elements such as landscaping, fences and walls, and exterior lighting play a key role in how new homes integrate within their neighborhood. Careful placement of fences and walls, protecting existing mature trees, appropriate site landscaping and site lighting can help maintain an appealing pedestrian environment. This section provides guidance on topics related to the design of fences and walls, landscaping, and site lighting.

A. SITE ELEMENTS

Intent

To ensure that site elements such as landscaping, fences and walls, and site lighting are designed to respond to neighborhood context, allow for privacy between units, and contribute to the site character.

Best Practices

Fences and Walls

Fences and walls are common elements used for screening and providing privacy. Typically, walls and fences in the front of a property are either not permitted or limited in height and/or materials to allow for a more active streetscape. Side and rear fencing or walls are less restrictive in terms of height and/or materials. Standards to consider include:

- **Allowed height –** Consider limiting opaque (solid) fences in the front yard to 3 feet or less. Require transparent fencing (those with through views) for taller fences, if so desired. For fences or walls in the side or rear setbacks, height limits may be higher, typically up to 6 feet.
- **Durability –** Require fences and walls to be built with durable materials to minimize future maintenance issues. Examples include brick, stone, concrete, stucco, etc., for walls and manufactured wood, wrought iron, steel, or similar material for fences.
- **Screening –** Transparent fences may be combined with plant materials to form an opaque screen.
- **Materials – allowed or prohibited –** Prohibit barbed wire and chain-link fencing.

Trees and Landscaping

Typically, a City's Municipal Code regulates site landscaping with standards governing location, amount and type of landscaping. A City may choose to augment their landscaping standards in an Objective Design standards document. Considerations include:

- **Tree Preservation.** Consider requiring the preservation or relocation of existing mature trees of six inches or greater in diameter at breast height (DBH).
- **Model Water Efficient Landscaping Requirements.** Enforce any required Model water efficient landscaping ordinance and requirements therein.
- **Tree and Plant Species.** If a City has a list of preferred street trees and shrubs, require selection from that list. Require a minimum percentage of native and drought-tolerant tree and shrub species.
- **Plant Size and Spacing.** Provide minimum plant size and spacing requirements to accommodate mature planting size.
- **Limits on Turf.** Limit use of natural turf except for recreation areas and high activity/foot-traffic areas. Artificial turf is often associated with increased surface temperature, which may be a constraint in the San Joaquin Valley. Consider limiting artificial turf to accent areas, high activity/foot traffic areas, and recreational areas.
- **Irrigation.** Require turf areas or other higher water use plantings to be grouped and irrigated separately from more drought-tolerant planting areas.

EXAMPLE

Shrubs Size. *All proposed shrubs shall be a minimum five-gallons in size, with a 15-gallon minimum size when required for screening. The minimum planter width for shrubs is three feet.*

Trees Size. *The minimum planting size for trees shall be 15-gallon, with 50 percent of all trees on a project site planted at a minimum 24-inch box size. Trees required for screening shall be a minimum 24-inch box size. The minimum planter width for trees shall be four feet.*

Spacing. *The spacing of trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants shall accommodate mature planting size. Where required for screening, spacing shall form an opaque barrier when planted.*

Site Lighting

Exterior site lighting for single-family home developments is typically limited to accent and pathway lighting. A City may choose to regulate site lighting to limit light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties. Considerations include:

- **Light fixture height.** Limit height of exterior fixtures to 12 feet. Sports fields may follow other standards.
- **Light Trespass or Glare**. Require all exterior lights to be directed, oriented, and shielded to prevent light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties.
- **Light Intensity**. Limit intensity of outdoor lighting to not exceed 1,000 lumens in intensity.

2.2 Multi-Family Residential and Mixed-Use

This Chapter provides guidance on design topics and standards for multi-family housing and residential mixed-use developments. Each of the topic areas listed below includes a description of intent, high level guidance, and examples of objective standards that address the topic.

2.2.1 Site Design and Circulation

Overview

The design of development sites plays a vital role in how new development fits within its surrounding context and helps shape the public realm. Careful placement of vehicle access, parking, and service areas can help maintain an appealing pedestrian environment and improve connectivity in and around the project site. This section provides guidance on best practices for site design and layout, including circulation, parking, utilities and service areas, and sustainable design features.

A. PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Intent

To provide facilities and accommodations for pedestrians, vehicles, cyclists, and transit users to access and circulate both within individual sites and in the site's surrounding context safely and efficiently.

Best Practices

Block Size

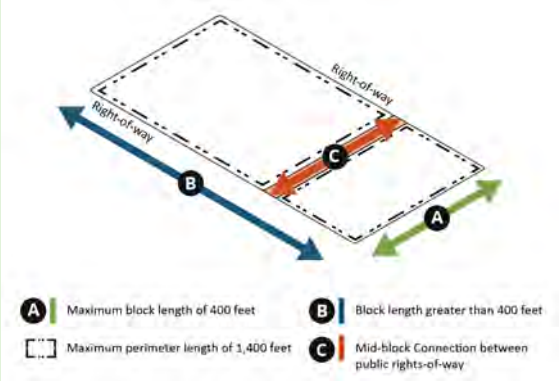
- Subdivide large blocks to create pedestrian-scale blocks that increase walkability.
- Look to adjacent or nearby block sizes to determine the block size that works within the existing context and development pattern of your community. Generally, block lengths should be no greater than 400 to 600 feet, the size of a typically walkable block.
- Consider requiring publicly-accessible mid-block connections (e.g., internal street, paseo, multi-use path, or open space) for existing, new, or assembled parcels or blocks with a block length greater than 400 feet to expand the pedestrian, bike, and vehicular circulation network and provide additional routes.

Street Network and Connectivity

- To the extent feasible, align new streets within any proposed development site with existing and planned streets adjacent to the site to create a connected street grid.
- Connect internal pedestrian and bike pathways in any development site to existing and planned public sidewalks, bike paths, and open spaces,

EXAMPLE

Block Size. *All projects shall have a maximum block length of 400 feet and a maximum perimeter length of 1,400 feet. Existing, new, or assembled parcels or blocks with a block length greater than 400 feet shall provide at least one mid-block connection that connects from one public right-of-way to another public right-of-way or public access easement.*



outside the proposed development site to create safe and continuous pedestrian and bicycle access to and around the site.

On-site Pedestrian Pathways

- Require on-site pedestrian pathways connect to existing and proposed public sidewalks, streets, transit stops, open spaces, bike paths, bicycle parking areas, and automobile parking areas within and adjacent to the project site to improve pedestrian access and connectivity.
- Similarly, require individual buildings/primary building entries to be connected to the public sidewalk and parking areas via on-site pedestrian pathways.
- Generally, on-site pedestrian pathways should be a minimum of 4 feet in width to provide a comfortable walking environment and meet ADA standards.
- Demarcate the areas where pedestrian paths cross vehicular routes with a change in grade, materials, textures, and/or colors to emphasize the conflict point and improve visibility and safety.

B. VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING

Vehicle Access and Curb Cuts

- Locate parking and service area access away from the public realm to minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment. This can be achieved by locating parking and service access from (in order of preference):
  - An alley
  - A driveway shared with a property abutting the development site
  - A side street
- Limit the number of curb cuts and driveways along the primary street frontage(s) to reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Encourage shared driveways for multiple buildings on a parcel or between abutting lots to minimize driveways intersecting with sidewalks.

EXAMPLE

Curb Cuts. *Each development project site shall be limited to one curb cut, including driveways and private/service streets, per 400 feet of public street frontage, or two curb cuts per street frontage, whichever is less (unless otherwise required for emergency vehicle access).*

Parking Location

- In downtown, high-density, and/or pedestrian-oriented zones, locate parking to the rear and side of buildings instead of between the building and adjacent streetscape/sidewalk to create a more pedestrian-oriented public realm. This can be achieved by:
  - Prohibiting parking in front of buildings along the primary frontage.
  - Limiting the proportion of the primary frontage occupied by parking and garage entrances.

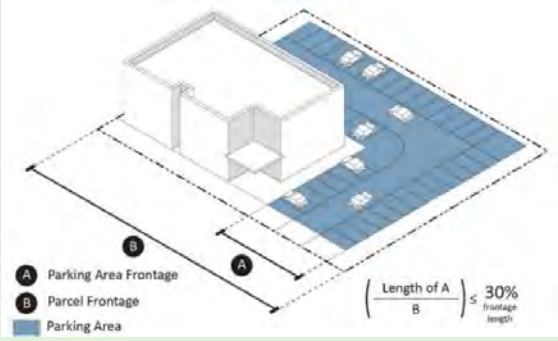
Surface Parking Lots

Screening surface parking lots from view minimizes impacts on the pedestrian experience. Considerations include:

- Screening
  - Use landscaping and/or low fencing/walls to screen surface parking along street frontages and publicly-accessible paths/open spaces to conceal parked vehicles and shield vehicle lights from the public realm.
  - Where a residential zone/property directly abuts a surface parking lot, install a solid fence or wall a minimum of six feet in height to provide screening and minimize impacts on the neighboring property.
- Landscaping
  - Consider minimum parking lot landscaping, canopy cover, and/or tree requirements, particularly for surface parking lots over a certain size, to mitigate heat island impacts.
  - Establish minimum requirements and dimensions for landscape planter islands/end islands and perimeter landscaping in parking lots to ensure that sufficient landscaping is provided and evenly dispersed throughout the parking lot.
- Pedestrian Routes
  - Provide separate and distinct pedestrian pathways to and through parking lots to connect with building entries so that pedestrians are not required to walk behind parked cars and along drive aisles.

EXAMPLE

Limitation on Parking Frontage. *No more than 30 percent of the linear primary street frontage or 50 linear feet, whichever is greater, shall be devoted to parking garage openings, carports, surface parking and/or driveways. If a site has more than one frontage, the parking shall not be located along the primary frontage. This limitation does not apply to frontages along alleys.*



- Consider using elevation changes, different paving materials, landscaping, bollards, and/or other design elements to clearly delineate pedestrian pathways from parking spaces and drive aisles, and alert drivers to potential conflicts with pedestrians.

Structured Parking

Integrating structured parking into building facades and/or screened from view minimizes impacts on the pedestrian experience.

- Screening garages can be achieved by:
  - Wrapping/lining the parking structure with residential or commercial space.
  - Treating the façade with the same material and articulation features as other façade areas.
  - Screening the ground level with landscaping and/or unique design features such as crafted ornamental metal screens, public art, murals, or other architectural treatments.
- Design parking levels above the ground floor with the same level of detail, material quality, and facade articulation as other facade areas.(e.g., use of real windows with glazing or false windows defined by frames, lintels, or sills).
- Integrate garage entries for new structures into building facades using architectural techniques such as matching facade and/or material treatments, and/or by partially recessing the entries into the building.

EXAMPLE

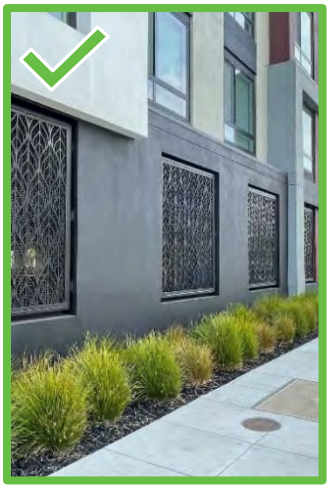
Structured parking shall be designed as follows:

Ground Level. *Except for garage entrances, any ground floor parking level facing a public right-of-way or publicly accessible open space or path (including partially subgrade parking visible above grade) shall:*

Be lined/wrapped with residential or commercial uses (where allowed by zoning) with a minimum depth of 20 feet or the required active frontage depth for that location (whichever is greater); or

Be designed and treated with the same level of detail, material quality, and facade articulation as other facade areas and/or screened with landscape screening (e.g., shrubs, landscaped trellises) and/or crafted ornamental metal screens. No more than 30 percent of the primary street frontage shall be occupied by the parking structure and any entrances.

Upper Levels. *Parking levels above the ground level may extend to the building facade but shall be designed and treated with the same level of detail, material quality, and facade articulation as other facade areas (e.g., facade articulation and modulation, use of real windows with glazing or false windows defined by frames, lintels, or sills). No more than two upper levels of parking shall extend to the building façade.*



C. Utilities, Equipment, and Service Areas

Intent

To locate and integrate utilities and service areas into building and landscape design to minimize impacts on the pedestrian experience and neighboring properties.

Best Practices

- Locate utilities and equipment (e.g., electric and gas meters, irrigation backflows, etc.), service, storage, and non-passenger loading areas inside of buildings or to the interior of a site (e.g., along alleys, in parking areas) to maintain an appealing environment on-site and along the adjacent public realm.
- Fully screen service, storage areas, utilities, and equipment not housed within buildings from public view.

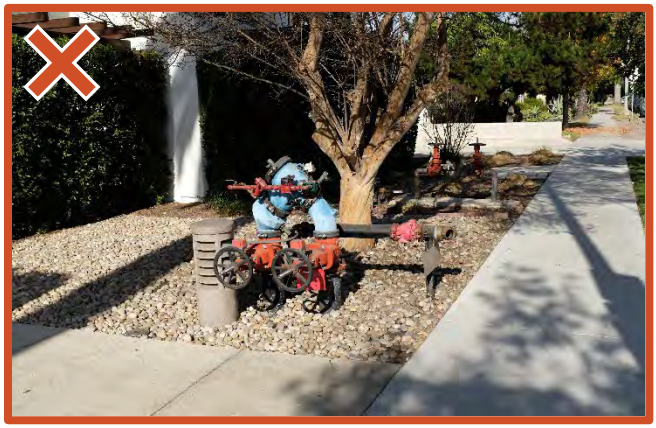
EXAMPLE

***Screening of Above-Ground Utilities, Storage and Service Areas**. All service and storage areas, utilities, and equipment not housed inside buildings shall meet the following screening standards:*

Screening shall be equal to or higher than the height of the equipment to be screened, unless specified otherwise.

Screening shall be made of a primary exterior finish material used on other portions of the building(s), architectural grade wood or masonry, metal, or landscape screening that forms an opaque barrier when planted.

All vents, flashing, electrical conduits, etc., shall be painted to match the color of the adjacent surface.



- Require that rooftop equipment be not visible from street level. One way to achieve this is to require equipment to be set back from the roof edge and/or screened using parapet walls, towers, or other architectural features.
- Consider noise-reducing walls, screens, and insulation to reduce impacts of noise-generating equipment such as air conditioning and exhaust fans on neighboring properties.

D. Sustainable Design Features

Intent

To promote sustainable building and site design features that generate or minimize energy use, effectively manage stormwater, and reduce heat gain.

Best Practices

- Incorporate sustainable design features such as rooftop photovoltaic generation, solar parking canopies, green roofs, and passive solar orientation.
- Incorporate green infrastructure treatments including rain gardens, vegetated buffers, bioswales, and permeable paving to reduce runoff and treat stormwater on-site.
- Direct drainage to permeable areas such as yards, open channels, or vegetated areas, avoiding discharge to impermeable surfaces.
- Establish minimum requirements for the planting of shade trees and use of lighter colors for paved and hardscape areas (e.g., driveways, parking lots, plazas) to help reduce heat gain.
- Preserve sensitive habitats and natural resources such as waterways, wetlands, etc. to the extent feasible.

EXAMPLES

Green Roofs. *Green roofs and rooftop gardens must include landscaping to decrease the heat island effect of large expanses of flat roofs, treat stormwater, and reduce heating and cooling energy demands.*

Permeable Pavement. *Projects shall use permeable pavement materials for pedestrian pathways, plazas, patios, residential driveways, and parking stalls to minimize the amount of impervious paved areas. Permeable paving includes pervious pavers, open-jointed pavers, and turf blocks.*

2.2.2 Building Design

Overview

The design of buildings can be crucial in supporting the pedestrian experience and fostering an active public realm. Building design contributes to the public realm at two scales: the scale of the surrounding physical context and the scale of the pedestrian. Appropriate building size and form can help relate to neighboring buildings, open spaces, and sites. Façade and ground floor design and detailing can create a sense of human scale at the ground level and provide visual interest for pedestrians. This section provides guidance on topics related to the design of buildings, including building modulation and articulation, ground floor design, entries, neighborhood transitions, and materials.

A. MODULATION AND ARTICULATION

Intent

To minimize the scale, massing, and bulk of buildings to respond to the scale of people and the building's context and encourage variation and fine-grained detailing on large facades that add visual interest.

Best Practices

Building and Massing Breaks

In human-scaled buildings, the overall bulk of a building is broken down with massing breaks, a rhythm along the street frontage, and detailed articulation. Major massing breaks help interrupt large façades, while minor massing breaks provide interest and divide facades into smaller, more human-scaled sections that reflect the overall building organization. The frequency and dimensions of massing breaks generally relates to the size, composition, and internal organization of the building. For massing breaks to be visually perceived as such, they can be less wide and deep for shorter buildings (e.g., buildings four stories or less) and need to be wider and deeper on taller buildings (five or more stories).

Massing standards include:

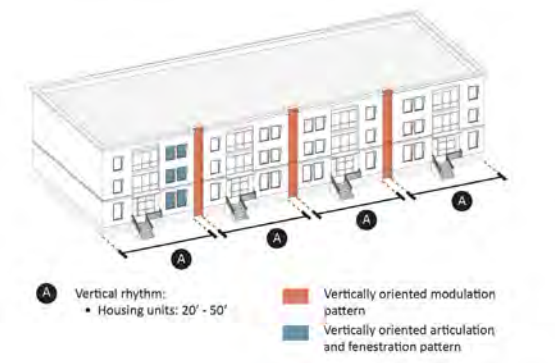
- Limit building length to no more than 300 feet, generally the length of a walkable block.

EXAMPLE

Major Massing Breaks. *Buildings 3 stories and taller shall have major massing breaks as follows:*

- *Buildings with primary building facades greater than or equal to 100 feet in length: Minimum one major massing break, with minimum depth of 8 feet and a minimum width of 10 feet. Major breaks shall extend the full height of the building including a break in the roofline.*
- *Buildings with primary building facades greater than 200 feet in length: Minimum two major massing breaks, with one major break with a minimum depth of 10 feet and minimum width of 20 feet.*

Minor Massing Breaks. *In addition to major massing breaks, all continuous building facades greater than or equal to 75 feet in length shall have at least one minor massing break. Minor breaks shall be a minimum of 2 feet deep and 5 feet wide and extend at minimum the full height of the building above the ground floor, including a break in the roofline.*



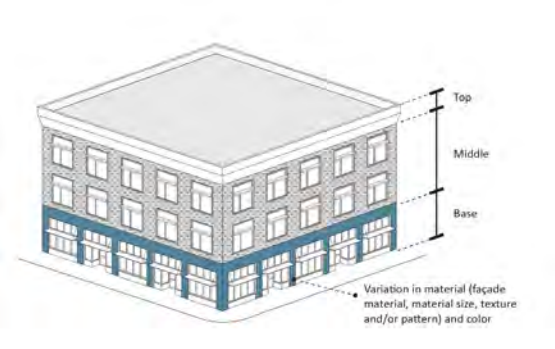
- Reflect the size, composition, and internal organization of the building in the frequency and dimensions of massing breaks.
  - Generally, building facades should have a major massing break every 100-150 feet of building length.
  - Use minor massing breaks to break up continuous façade lengths at intervals of no less than 25 feet and no more than 100 feet to provide visual interest and without complicating the design and construction of the building.
  - Major breaks are typically at least 10 feet wide and 5 feet deep. Minor breaks are typically about 3-5 feet wide and 2 feet deep.
  - Extend massing breaks the full height of the building, including a break in the roofline.

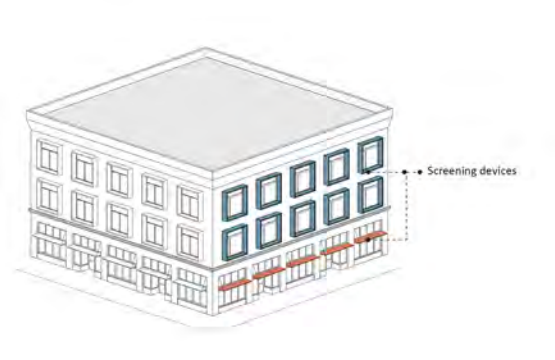
Façade Design

- Another technique to reduce the perceived scale of building facades is to horizontally divide the façade into a defined base, middle, and top. This can be achieved through:
  - Ground floor stepback (e.g., arcade or gallery).
  - Upper floor stepback.
  - Distinct roof form or roof lines.
  - Variations in façade composition, such as projections, recesses, fenestration size, proportions, or depth.
  - Datum lines, such as cornices or parapets, along the entire length of the building.
  - Variations in material, material size, texture, pattern, and/or color.
- Consider requiring upper story stepbacks to help reduce the building's presence along the streetscape, reducing the perceived bulk and height of buildings and allowing them to fit more seamlessly into a context with lower-scale buildings.
- Vertically divide building façades into modules and bays that organize and break up long facades into discrete sections. Generally, these modules and bays should reflect the size and scale of a housing unit and/or individual rooms and spaces; typically, between 20 to 50 feet in

EXAMPLE

Base, Middle, Top. *Buildings over two stories shall be designed to differentiate a defined base or ground floor, a middle or body, and a top, cornice, or parapet cap. This standard applies to all exterior facing facades. The base, middle, and top shall be distinguished from one another for at least 75% of the façade length.*





width of linear frontage. This can be achieved with vertical patterns of building modulation, facade articulation, and fenestration. This rhythm of vertical patterns is typically between 20 to 50 feet in width of linear frontage.

Articulation

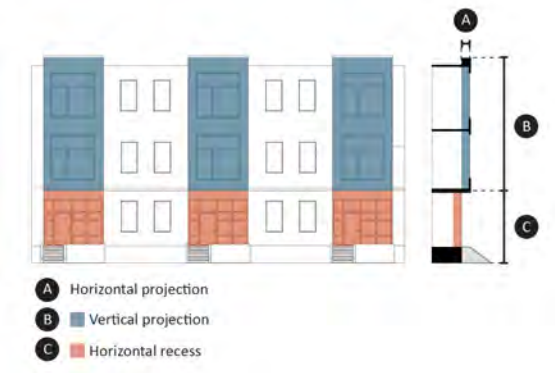
Facade articulation refers to the design elements used to break up the flatness of a building's facade, adding depth and complexity to the exterior face of a building. By highlighting different elements of a building, articulation can create a more engaging and visually appealing design.

- Treat all public-facing facades with the same level of detail and material quality.
- Avoid blank walls along the ground floor on primary street frontages to the extent feasible. Where blanks walls are unavoidable, utilize articulation methods to minimize the visual impact, including trellises, landscape screening, decorative tilework, and/or public art.
- Require the use of a variety of articulation strategies that create a sense of human scale and add interesting details on building facades. This can be achieved through a combination of the following articulation strategies:
  - Projections – an area of the façade that physically projects from the exterior wall surface by at least 4 inches.
  - Recesses – an area of a façade that is physically recessed from the exterior wall surface by at least 4 inches.
  - Datum lines – Datum lines along the entire length of the building, such as cornices.
  - Habitable or Juliet balconies. Balconies should be a minimum of 5 feet in depth; Juliet balconies should be a minimum of 8 inches in depth.
  - Screening devices, such as louvers, shading devices, or perforated metal screens. Screening and shading devices should be a minimum of 2 feet in depth; lattices, louvers, and metal screens should have a minimum depth of four inches.
  - Fine-grained materials, such as brick, tile, or wood shingles.
  - Variation in material patterns and/or textures.

EXAMPLE

Facade Articulation. *All facades shall include a minimum of two of the following facade articulation strategies to create visual interest:*

- ***Recesses.*** *Vertical and horizontal recesses such as a pattern of recessed grouping of windows, recessed panels, or similar strategies. The recess shall be a minimum four inches in depth.*
- ***Projections.*** *Vertical and horizontal projections such as shading and weather protection devices (for windows), decorative architectural details, or similar strategies. Shading and weather protection projections shall be a minimum of two feet in depth. Architectural projections shall be a minimum of four inches in depth.*
- ***Datum Lines.*** *Horizontal lines that continue the full length of the building, such as cornices, with a minimum four inches in height, and a minimum two inches in depth with a change in material.*
- ***Balconies.*** *Balconies or Juliet balconies (every 20 to 50 feet). Balconies shall be a minimum of five feet in depth; Juliet balconies shall be a minimum of eight inches in depth.*
- ***Screening Devices.*** *Screening devices such as lattices, louvers, shading devices, perforated metal screens, or similar strategies.*



Corner Treatments

Buildings located at the intersection of two streets can help define key nodes and gateways. Requiring special treatments for corner buildings can provide These buildings are encouraged to provide one or more special corner treatments such as:

- A corner entry
- A publicly-accessible open space or plaza
- A special architectural feature such as a rounded or cut corner, tower/cupola, or similar feature
- A different material application and/or fenestration pattern from the rest of the façade
- A change in height and/or roofline
- Public art

Fenestration

Fenestration should be organized, patterned, and grouped to reflect and reinforce the building organization and use. For example, ground floors generally have a higher percentage of openings (windows and doors) that provide views into shopfronts and other active uses.

- Establish requirements for vertical window proportions (e.g., portrait orientation, with greater vertical to horizontal ratio).
- Require windows to be recessed from the façade or include trim of adequate depth and width to create a shadow line and highlight fenestration.
- Make window trim consistent with the architectural character of the building.

B. Ground Floor Design

Intent

To create inviting and vibrant ground floors that encourage pedestrian activity and provide transitions between the public realm and private development.

Best Practices

Non-Residential Ground Floors

- Establish adequate floor-to-floor heights for ground floors to create usable space for a wide range of non-residential uses, typically between 15 to 18 feet in height.
- Require retail ground floor facades and other active frontages to have transparent glazing at the pedestrian eye level to provide visibility between the public realm and interior spaces. Limit or prohibit dark tinted, reflective, mirror, or opaque glazing.
- Provide commercial clerestory and transom windows -- a continuous horizontal band or row of windows across the upper portion of the shopfront -- to allow extra light to enter the interior space.
- Require a durable bulkhead or solid base wall for retail or commercial storefronts along primary street frontages.

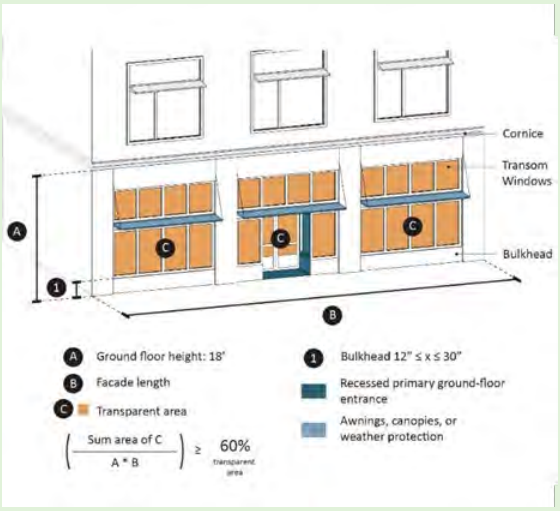
Residential Ground Floors

- Raise ground floor residential units that are close to the public sidewalk above grade to provide privacy from passersby. Provide landscaping for interest and screening.
- Design entries to ground floor residential units to provide a transition between public and private space, using entry types such as stoops, porches, patios, terraces, or frontage courts.

EXAMPLE

Ground Floor Design – Retail/Commercial:

- ***Ground Floor Height****. The minimum ground floor height for retail/commercial is 18 feet floor-to-floor.*
- ***Weather Protection.*** *Primary ground floor entrances shall include weather protection that is a minimum six feet wide and four feet deep by recessing the entry, providing an awning/canopy, or using a combination of these methods.*
- ***Transparency.*** *Storefronts in new mixed-use developments shall contain clear openings and windows for a minimum of 60 percent of the linear length of the first-floor facades facing sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly-accessible open space areas. Dark tinted, reflective, mirrored, or opaque glazing is not permitted for any required wall opening along ground floor retail facades.*
- ***Bulkheads and Solid Base Walls.*** *If provided, bulkheads and solid base walls shall not be less than 12 inches or higher than 30 inches from finished grade.*
- ***Transom Windows.*** *Commercial clerestory and transom windows are recommended to provide a continuous horizontal band or row of windows across the upper portion of the shopfront.*



C. Building Elements

Intent

To design building elements as parts of a cohesive whole, creating a human-scaled and visually engaging environment for pedestrians.

Best Practices

Building Entries

Building entries should be easily identifiable, scaled proportionally to the number of people served (amount of floor-area or number of units accessed), and integrated into the overall facade composition. For example, lobby entries that serve multiple units are typically wider with double doors and deep overhangs. In contrast, a covered porch entry for an individual unit might be 4 feet wide and 4 feet deep. Other considerations include:

- Provide ground floor entrances and openings at frequent intervals along the primary street frontage.
- Locate primary building entries and tenant space entries to face or be directly visible from the public right-of-way or a publicly-accessible path/open space.
- Recommended techniques for accentuating building entries and providing visual interest include:
  - Differentiated roof form, canopy, or portico
  - Recessing the entry
  - Decorative trim details
  - Accent lighting
  - Landscaping

EXAMPLE

Shared Entries:

- *Primary shared building entries shall face or be directly visible from the public right-of-way or a publicly-accessible path/open space. This may be through a lobby, front porch, or forecourt (or combination).*
- *Shared building entries shall be distinguished from the façade of the building with a massing projection or recess with a minimum depth of 2 feet and a minimum width of 10 feet.*

Weather Protection

- Provide weather protection at primary entries, either by recessing the entrance into the façade and/or with an awning or canopy.
- Choose the style, colors, and material used for awnings and canopies to be consistent with overall the character and style of the building. Encourage durable and weather resistant materials such as canvas, nylon, metal, wood, and glass.
- When transom windows are above display windows, install weather protection devices between the transom windows and display windows to allow for light to enter the storefront through the transom windows.

Materials and Colors

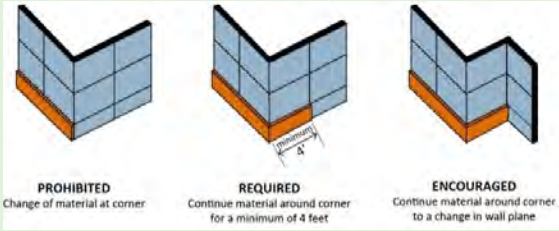
Materials and finishes convey high-quality and should be used to complement the overall building design. For example, they can help reinforce the base, middle, and top of the building and distinguish between façade modules. Materials impart color as well, so while variation in materials is encouraged, the overall choice of color and materials should be carefully coordinated. Other standards to consider include:

- Incorporate high-quality, exterior materials such as masonry, stone, stucco, wood, brick, glass, and finished metal that are durable and require minimal maintenance.
- Integrate primary, secondary, and/or accent colors in building facades. Primary colors should be used on most of the façade surface, with secondary colors covering the remainder. Accent materials/colors may be used to highlight details such as moldings, trims, bulkheads, and/or signage.
- Match the color of the building components such as vents, gutters, downspouts, flashing, etc. with adjacent surface such that they blend in with the building façade.
- Color and/or material changes on a façade should occur in the following locations:
  - At inside corners rather than outside corners;
  - At a horizontal articulation; and/or
  - At the boundaries between façade modules.

EXAMPLES

***Variation in Materials**. At least two materials shall be used on any building frontage, in addition to glazing and railings. Any one material must comprise at least 20 percent of the building frontage, excluding windows, railings, base bulkheads, and trim.*

***Material Changes at Corners.** A change in material must be offset by a minimum of two inches in depth. Materials shall continue around corners for a minimum distance of four feet. If feasible, the same material should continue to the next change in the wall plane.*



D. Privacy

Intent

To design buildings that are compatible with and are good neighbors to the adjacent properties.

Best Practices

Adjacency to Neighboring Properties

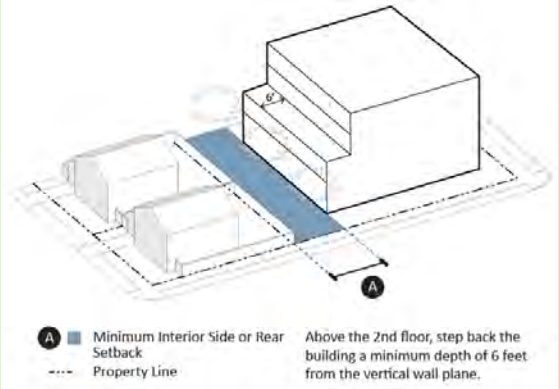
Large buildings adjacent to existing lower-scale residential buildings can cause privacy as well solar access impacts. Design techniques such as deeper setbacks, upper floor stepbacks, and/or massing breaks, can be used to mitigate these impacts. Techniques include:

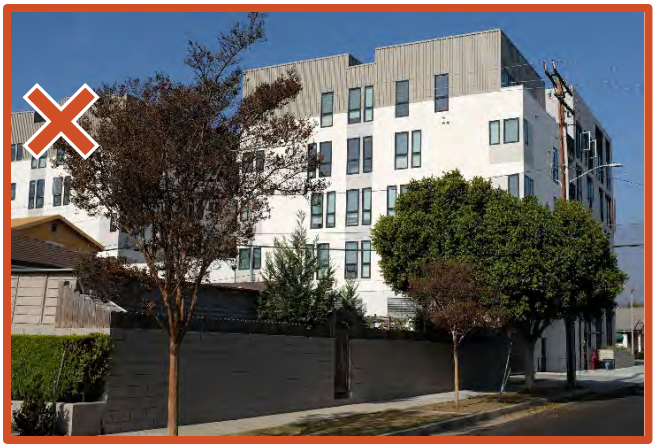
- **Stepbacks.** Provide an upper floor step back when the height of the building is two stories(or more) above the height of an adjacent building.
- **Screening/Buffers.** Provide a landscape screen, including a row of trees and continuous low plantings when a building abuts a side and/or rear property line with existing residential use.
- **Windows and Balconies.** Place windows and balconies on facades abutting a side and/or rear property line with existing residential use to avoid directly facing residential windows on adjacent residential buildings or private open areas.

EXAMPLE

Stepbacks. Adjacent to Single-Family Residential. *Buildings 3 or more stories in height and located within 80 feet of a shared property line with an R-1 zone shall meet the following standards:*

- *Along the shared rear-yard property line, buildings shall incorporate an upper floor step back above the 2nd floor with a minimum depth of 6 feet from the vertical wall plane or shall set back the entire building frontage a minimum of 25 feet from the shared property line.*
- *For parcels adjacent to an alley, buildings shall incorporate an upper floor step back above the 3rd floor with a minimum depth of 6 feet from the vertical wall plane fronting the alley.*
- *Balconies shall be a minimum distance of 15 feet from the shared property line.*





2.2.3 Open Space and Site Elements

Overview

This section provides guidance on best practices for designing open spaces, common areas, and other site elements such as fencing, walls, and landscaping.

Open spaces provide access to light, air, greenery, and recreational opportunities, which contributes to a healthier environment and lifestyle for residents. There are three types of open spaces that may be provided as a part of new development: publicly-accessible common open spaces, private common open areas, and personal private open areas, as further defined below:

Publicly-accessible common open spaces are privately owned and maintained outdoor open spaces that are made available for public use for recreation and gathering. These outdoor spaces may include plazas, courtyards, outdoor dining areas, seating areas, play areas, recreational facilities or equipment, dog parks, and usable green space, among others. These types of community open spaces may be provided in larger developments (e.g., over 4 acres in size) and are purposefully designed as a community-wide amenity.

Private common open spaces are outdoor open spaces that are shared and accessible only to building residents and their visitors. Common open spaces may include courtyards, gardens, play areas, barbeque/dining areas, recreational amenities, and rooftop open spaces.

Personal private open areas are intended for private use for each dwelling unit and may include balconies (covered or uncovered), private gardens, private yards, terraces, decks, and porches, among others.

The minimum amount of private open areas required by zone and/or use are generally located in a jurisdiction's zoning ordinance and should be calibrated to a project/building size and physical context. Objective design standards for private open areas should be used to complement these minimum space requirements and ensure that open areas are designed such that they are vibrant, usable, and have adequate amenities.

A. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Intent

To ensure the provision of open spaces that are usable, attractive, inviting, and safe.

Best Practices

Publicly Accessible Common Open Space

There are two common types of publicly-accessible common open spades: Public Greens and Plazas. **Public greens** are generally most appropriate in a residential neighborhood context and should be designed for passive and limited recreational uses. Plazas are more appropriate in higher-density, more urban and downtown settings. **Plazas** should be designed for social gathering and can complement active ground floor uses such as shops and restaurants that have high pedestrian activity. Though plazas tend to feature more hardscape elements and furnishings than public greens, they should still provide trees and landscaping. When possible, publicly-accessible common open spaces should be located, oriented, and designed in a way that will support community events such as farmers' markets, art fairs, live music concerts, and other periodic special programming to support community gathering. Standards to regulate publicly-accessible common open spaces include:

- Require publicly-accessible common open spaces to be accessible to the public during daylight hours.
- Regulate visibility requirements to encourage natural surveillance. Publicly-accessible common open spaces should be visible from and located adjacent to pedestrian activity areas including building entrances, sidewalks, pedestrian paths or multi-use paths, residential units, lobbies, retail, dining, and entertainment uses.
- Design elements for publicly-accessible common open spaces include:
    - a minimum dimension of 20 feet in at least one direction with a minimum total area of at least 300 feet to ensure that they are large enough to be usable
    - landscaping, seating options (e.g., seat walls, planter ledges, benches, picnic tables, seating steps), shade structures ((e.g., awnings, trellises, umbrellas), and other amenities such as water features, public art, drinking fountains, and public restrooms

B. PRIVATE OPEN AREAS

Intent

To ensure the provision of usable and attractive private open areas that are available for residents.

Best Practices

Private Common Open Areas

Private common open areas are generally provided within a yard, within the building (courtyard), or on the roof (roof deck). Rooftop decks are an efficient way of providing common open space on smaller or more constrained parcels. Consider the following best practices:

- Locate common open areas centrally to the development and provide access to all building residents.
- Unless located on the rooftop, require common open spaces to be visible from residential units and/or other common areas such as building lobbies and internal pedestrian paths to provide for natural surveillance.
- Address privacy for both the rooftop deck and neighboring properties by setting back the rooftop deck further from the building edge and using screening devices.
- Standards to regulate privately-accessible common open areas include:
  - Minimum dimension of at least 20 feet in any direction such that it is usable space.
  - Courtyards surrounded on three or four sides by a building should have larger dimensions to ensure that they are not shaded by the building for much of the day.
  - Minimum amount of landscaping with trees, shrubs, and groundcover.
  - Low fences, walls, and/or landscaping that define the edge of common open areas and provide a separation from private spaces and units.

Chapter 1 Provide amenities to create vibrant and well-used common open areas. The number and types of amenities provided should generally be proportional to the number of units/residents served. Examples include:

EXAMPLE

Private Open Areas. *Private open areas are intended for private use for individual dwelling units and may include balconies (covered or uncovered), private yards, terraces, decks, and porches, among others. Private open areas shall meet the following standards:*

- *Shall be directly accessible from the residential unit;*
- *Minimum Dimensions:*
  - *Private yards: Minimum 15 feet in any direction.*
  - *Ground-floor private outdoor space: Minimum 10 feet in at least one direction.*
  - *Upper-floor private outdoor space (e.g., balconies): Minimum 5 feet in any direction.*
- *Minimum clear height dimension of 8 feet, measured from the ground level or decking.*
- *Balcony enclosures shall be solid/opaque when facing front or street side property lines. Balcony enclosures facing interior open areas may be transparent/semi-transparent.*

- Shade structures to make spaces comfortable during the summer months
- A variety of seating options, such as benches, picnic tables, and seat walls
- A tot lot or play equipment for families with children
- Active recreational amenities such as a swimming pool, sports facilities, and exercise equipment

Private Personal Open Areas

Private personal open areas are directly accessible from the unit they serve. They are generally at-grade spaces attached to ground floor units (patio), or spaces attached to individual units on upper stories (balcony). These should be of a sufficient size to create a usable space for residents to spend time outdoors. Standards to regulate personal private open areas include:

- Minimum dimension of at least 5 feet in any direction, which will accommodate seating and a table. Ground floor patios are typically larger than upper story balconies.
- Provide screening for ground level personal private open areas from adjacent streets, common open areas, and other units by low fences, walls, landscaping, or other screening elements.
- Design balcony enclosures to be solid/opaque when facing front or street side property lines to provide privacy. Balcony enclosures facing interior open space areas may be transparent/semi-transparent to allow for visibility and natural surveillance.

C. Fences and Walls

Intent:

To ensure that fences and walls are made of high-quality materials, add visual interest, are reflective of the building architecture, and are compatible with the character of surrounding development.

Best Practices

- Require fences and walls complement building architecture and the surrounding setting by using similar styles, colors, and materials.
- Construct fencing and walls of high-quality, durable materials such as masonry, concrete, treated wood, wrought iron or similar materials.
- Require fences and walls over 50 feet in length to provide design features that reduce visual monotony, such as:
  - Changes in plane (offsets).
  - Changes in height (decorative columns or pilasters that extend above the primary fence/wall).
  - Trellises with climbing plants.
  - Variations in materials and/or textures.
  - Landscaping along fences and walls to soften their appearance.

EXAMPLE

Wall and Fence Design. *All new walls and fences, including sound walls, or combination thereof that face a public right-of-way, publicly accessible path, or open space, and are 50 feet in length or longer and four feet in height or taller shall be designed to minimize visual monotony through at least one of the following:*

- ***Changes in plane.*** *An offset a minimum of two feet deep for every 50 feet to 75 feet in length of wall.*
- ***Changes in height.*** *Wall inserts and/or decorative columns or pilasters that extend above the primary fence line at a minimum of every 20 feet in length to provide articulation and relief.*
- ***Variation in material.*** *Variation in material and/or material texture.*
- ***Landscaping.*** *Landscape along a minimum of 75 percent of the linear length of the public-facing side of the fence/wall. Landscape planter width shall be a minimum of two feet in depth.*

D. Landscaping

Intent:

To use landscape design to create character and identity, enhance pathways and open spaces, add shade to the urban environment, provide a visual buffer or screening, and aid in stormwater management.

Best Practices

- Consider requiring a minimum percentage of live plant material in landscape areas to ensure sufficient plant coverage. Remaining areas may consist of crushed rock, mulch, pebbles, stones, and similar non-plant materials.
- Establish minimum plant sizes for shrubs, trees, and landscape screening to achieve an immediate effect of landscape installation.
- Require drought-tolerant and/or native plant species to reduce water use and encourage natural habitats.
- Require landscaped areas to be top-dressed with a bark chip mulch or a similar material to avoid exposed, bare soil and water loss.
- Group plants by similar water usage to reduce over- or under-watering of landscape areas.
- Limit turf areas to activity or recreation areas as these are very water-intensive. Use synthetic turf as a substitute for natural turf for the purposes of water conservation, or in high activity or foot-traffic areas such as sports fields.
- Preserve existing mature trees whenever feasible to increase tree canopy. Several ways of incentivizing preservation of existing trees include:
    - Adding tree replacement requirements for removal of existing trees (e.g., 3 replacement trees per existing tree removed).
    - Giving existing trees over a certain size a higher value towards meeting landscaping requirements (e.g., existing trees receive double credit towards minimum tree/canopy requirements).

EXAMPLES

Drought-tolerant Landscaping. *A minimum of 75% of non-turf landscaped areas shall be planted with native or drought-tolerant planting to bring interest and beauty to the landscape, support biodiversity, and reduce the need for pesticides and excessive irrigation.*

Plant Size and Spacing *To achieve an immediate effect of a landscape installation and to allow sustained growth of planting materials, minimum plant material sizes, plant spacing, and minimum planter widths (inside measurements) are as follows:*

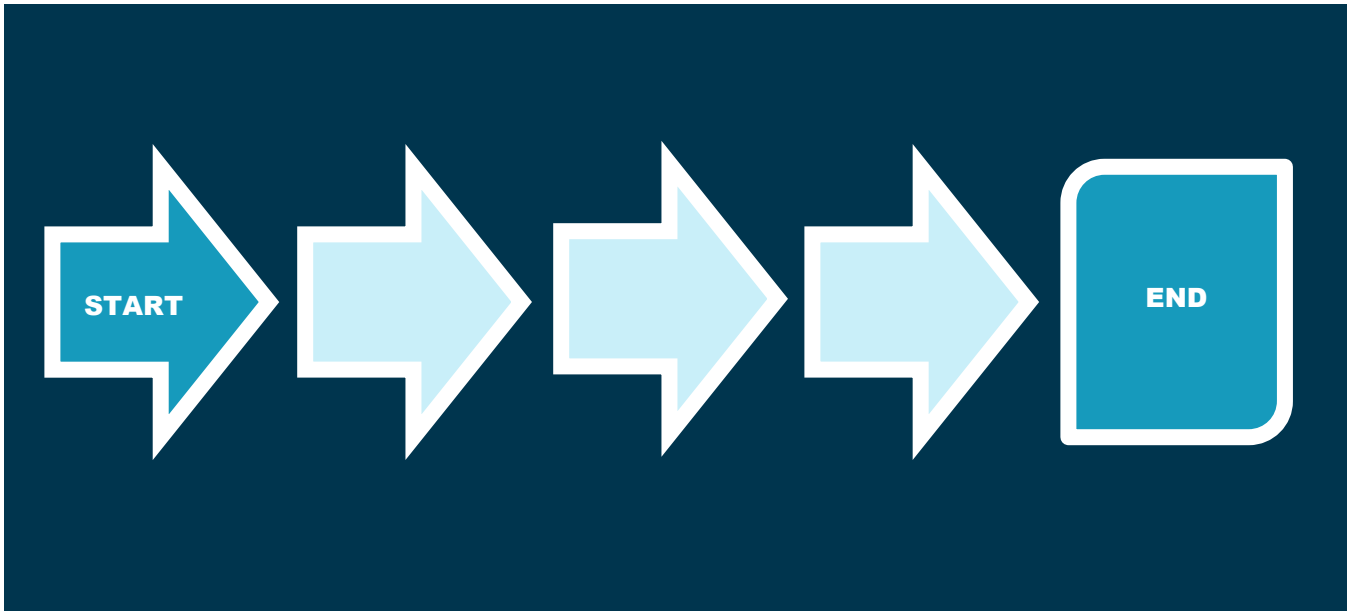
- *All proposed shrubs except accent, color, or ground cover planting shall be a minimum 5 gallons in size, with a 15-gallon minimum size where required for screening. The minimum planter width for shrubs is 3 feet.*
- *The minimum planting size for trees shall be 15-gallon, with 25% of all trees on a project site planted at a minimum 24-inch box size. Minimum planter area for trees shall be 5 feet by 5 feet.*
- *Street trees shall be planted at a minimum average of one tree per 30-45 linear feet of sidewalk length (depending on the species and mature canopy width or growth habit).*

E. Site Lighting

A City may choose to regulate site lighting to limit light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties and to require pedestrian lighting along walkways. Considerations include:

- **Pathway lighting.** Provide lighting along pedestrian and multi-use paths at minimum intervals of every 40 feet.
- **Light fixture height.** Limit height of exterior fixtures to 12 feet. Sports fields may follow other standards.
- **Light Trespass or Glare**. Require all exterior lights to be directed, oriented, and shielded to prevent light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties.
- **Light Intensity**. Limit intensity of outdoor lighting to not exceed 1,000 lumens in intensity.

Chapter 3
Roadmap to Objective Design Standards



3.1 Roadmap to Adoption

This chapter outlines the steps that a community should take to adopt objective design standards. It is important at the outset to review existing zoning regulations to determine if all desired building types such as “missing middle” housing are permitted. Changes to zoning regulations may be necessary to ensure that the preferred housing can be built.

While this guidebook comprehensively addresses all topics that could be considered in a community’s objective design standards, it is recommended that City staff carefully consider which topics are of importance in their community. This should include meeting with key internal (building department, economic development department, design review committees, etc.) and external stakeholders (local architects and developers, residents, etc.) to get input on the topics that are important to the community.

Objective design standards should then be developed for those topics using the best practices and guidance provided in this guidebook. At the same time, the project review process should be reviewed for consistency with state law to allow for streamlined and ministerial review.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, communities should consider changes to their subdivision ordinance to include additional findings or standards for new subdivisions. Additionally, communities should contemplate adopting a small lot subdivision ordinance to allow for this affordable housing type.

When determining how to adopt your City’s Objective Design Standards, there are two primary options: adoption through a zoning code (ordinance) or as a stand-alone document (by resolution or ordinance). Each method has its own benefits and limitations:

Option 1: Resolution (Stand-Alone Document)

- **Amendments**: Easier to amend over time, allowing the ability for more frequent updates to respond to emerging issues, evolving design trends, or changes in community needs.
- **Graphics:** Allows for greater flexibility in formatting, including the ability to incorporate user-friendly graphics, photos, and visual examples that can help make the standards more clearly understood.
- **Design Guidelines:** Can include design guidelines for projects that don’t require objective standards, providing additional flexibility for developers and helping to guide design for projects seeking discretionary approval, where objective design standards are not required.
- **Implementation**: Takes effect immediately after adoption.

Option 2: Ordinance (Zoning Code)

- **Consistency:** Integrates the design standards into the City’s official land use regulations, offering greater consistency and clarity for enforcement.
- **Cohesion:** Creates a cohesive regulatory framework, ensuring design standards are aligned with other zoning and land use requirements.
- **Amendments:** More difficult to amend, requiring a longer process.
- **Graphics:** Less flexible in formatting, as ordinances are typically more text-heavy and may not easily accommodate visual elements.
- **Implementation:** Takes longer to implement due to the need for a second reading and a 30-day effective date after approval.

3.2 Six Steps for Implementation

Figure 3.1 Steps for adopting Objective Design Standards

When adopting objective design standards for your community, follow the steps below. Use the Evaluation Tool in Appendix B to guide you through the process for Steps 1-4 below.

Chapter 4
Glossary & Resources

4.1 Glossary

Active Frontage. Building front with active uses where there is a visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor. Active uses are uses that generate many visits, in particular pedestrian visits, over an extended period of the day. Active uses may be shops, cafes, other social uses. Higher density residential and office uses also can be active uses during some periods of the day if they provide entries to individual units or ground floor office spaces.

Architectural Style. A set of characteristics and features that make a building or other structure notable or historically identifiable. Descriptions and standards related to specific architectural styles are included in Appendix A (Architectural Style Guide). Examples of architectural styles include Craftsman, Spanish Revival, Mid-Century/Ranch, etc.

Articulation. The three-dimensional detailing of the external walls of a building. Facade articulation may include notched setbacks, projecting bays, balconies, screening devices, etc.

Balcony. An accessible platform structure that projects from a building facade or wall without ground mounted structures or supports and is surrounded by a railing or parapet.

Block Size. The length and width of a parcel or series of parcels measuring from the edge of one public right-of-way or public access easement to another.

Building Length. The overall length of a facade without a full break in the building.

Connectivity. The ease of getting from one place to another. Connectivity is related to the characteristics of street design, such as the distance between and the number and type of connections between two places.

Cornice. Any horizontal decorative molding that extends the length of the top of crowns a building.

Datum Line. Horizontal lines that continue the full length of the building, such as cornices.

Development Site. The land area, consisting of one or more recorded lots when comprehensively designed and developed. Could be either under one ownership or for use as a condominium.

Eave. The part of a roof that meets or overhangs the walls of a building.

Façade. The exterior wall or face of a building, usually fronting a public street.

Fenestration. The arrangement of windows and doors on the elevation of a building.

Frontage (Lot). The front lot line; also, the length thereof.

Grade. The ground surface immediately adjacent to the exterior base of a structure, typically used as the basis for measurement of the height of the structure.

Human-Scaled Elements. Building and urban design features that are designed to meet the proportional, physical, and psychological needs of the human body. This could include creating a walkable block structure, architectural elements and details that are visible and perceivable to pedestrians and building massing that reflects the rhythm, pattern, and size of interior spaces.

Intersection Density. Intersection density is a measure of how connected a street network is. It is determined by dividing the number of intersections (points where two or more roads meet) by the area in square miles. Areas with high intersection density are more walkable, while areas with low intersection density are less walkable.

Landscaped Area. Surface area dedicated for planting of trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, ground cover, or other horticultural elements.

Lintel. A piece of wood, stone, or steel placed horizontally across the top of window and door openings to support the wall immediately above.

Major Break. A massing break or facade modulation that is wide and deep enough that it divides up the facade of a building to create the sense of multiple separate building masses. Minimum dimensions for a major break should be provided in the design standards.

Massing. The overall size, shape, and arrangement of a building or group of buildings.

Mid-Block Connection. A public right-of-way or private land area with a public access easement that is interior to a block and connects one public right-of-way to another.

Minor Breaks. Horizontal changes to the facade plane that provide articulation to the building facade. Minor breaks typically occur to distinguish a residential rhythm and pattern to a building facade with modulations spaced to the width of a room, unit, or group of units. Minor breaks may be recesses or projections like bay windows.

Modulation. The stepping back or projecting forward portions of the building face with specified intervals of building width and depth, as a means of breaking up the apparent bulk of the building.

Multi-plex. A detached (typically 2- to 3-story) house-form structure that consists of 2 or more dwelling units arranged side-by-side and/or stacked, typically with a shared entry from the street.

Non-Residential Ground Floor. The ground floor of any building with non-residential uses, which may include retail, commercial, industrial, institutional, and/or office use.

Parapet. A low protective wall along the edge of a roof, terrace, balcony, or similar structure, designed to guard against sudden drops.

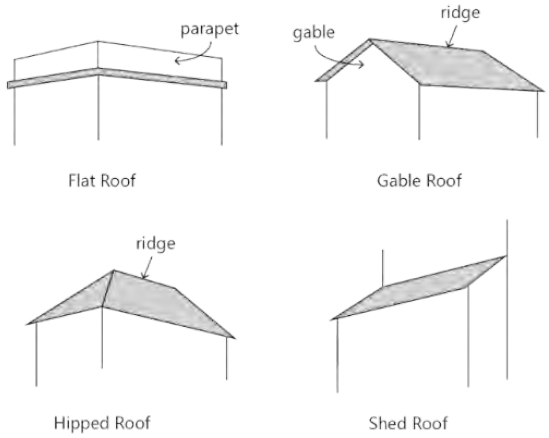
Pedestrian Pathway. A walkway or sidewalk that connects into or through a development.

Primary Building Facade. The building facade that abuts the primary street, typically the front lot line. In the case of a through-lot, the primary building frontage could be on either public right-of-way.

Primary Street Frontage. Portions of a building with the main entrance. The "front" façade of a building.

Roof (Flat). A roof with a slope, or pitch, of less than 10 degrees.

Roof (Sloping). A roof with a slope, or pitch, of more than 10 degrees. Sloping roof shapes include gable roofs with two sloping sides and a gable at each end, hipped roofs with four sloped sides, shed roofs with only one sloping plane.



Setback. The horizontal distance between a property line (or back-of-sidewalk where specified) and the nearest building line or façade.

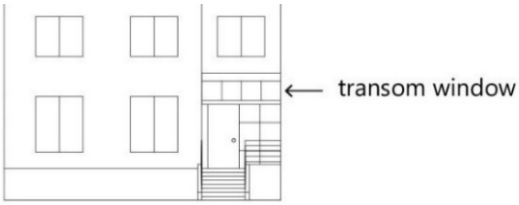
Stepback. The vertical or horizontal recess or setback of a building's upper floors from the lower floors.

Stoop. A small staircase ending in a platform leading to the entrance of an apartment building or rowhouse.

Storefront. The front of a retail use that provides goods or services to customers on the premises. This includes stores, shops, restaurants, bars, and eating and drinking businesses.

Structured Parking. Podium parking located within a multi-family or mixed-use building that is either below-grade, partially sub-grade, at-grade, or above-grade. Podium parking is typically built as Type I or II construction.

Transom Windows. Any small, horizontal window over a door or window, often operable for ventilation.



Walkability. Walkability refers to the ease with which one can walk to services and amenities safely and comfortably within a reasonable distance. It is shaped by several factors such as well-maintained sidewalks, visible street crossings, and elements of the overall built environment such as uses, landscaping, shade, lighting, among others.

4.2 Resources

1. Association of Bay Area Governments, Objective Design Standards Handbook for Residential and Mixed-Use Projects, April 2024
2. California Department of Housing and Community Development, PlaceWorks, Approaches and Considerations for Objective Design Standards, January 2021
3. San Joaquin Valley Regional Early Action Planning (REAP), Small-lot Planning Study for the San Joaquin Valley, August 2024

Appendix A

Architectural Style Guide

This Architectural Style Guide describes the character defining features of several common architectural styles of single-family homes in the San Joaquin Valley region. New single-family homes should be designed using architectural elements such as building form, detailing, decorative features, colors, and materials, that are authentic to the selected style, while adhering to all adopted objective design standards.

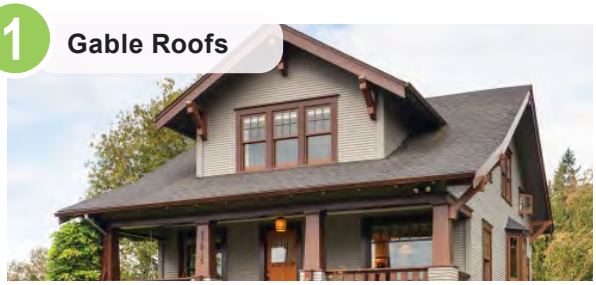
Architectural styles discussed in this guide include:

- Craftsman
- Spanish Revival
- Mid-Century/Ranch
- Victorian
- Modern Farmhouse

A. Craftsman

Craftsman style architecture traces its origins back to the late 19th century, and was inspired by the English Arts and Crafts Movement. American designers made it their own, especially in California. It is characterized by a simple yet functional design, a preference for natural materials, and a strong emphasis on craftsmanship. Craftsman homes are typically one or one-and-a-half stories tall, with low-pitched roofs, overhanging eaves, and exposed beams. They often feature wide front porches with tapered columns, wood shingle or stucco exteriors, and built-in furniture and other handcrafted elements. This style is typically found in single-family residential homes with some examples in the "missing middle" housing types. Some of the key characteristics of Craftsman style architecture include:

1 Gable Roofs



Wide unenclosed eave overhangs, with the gable roofs facing the street.

2 Exposed rafters

Beams, rafter tails, brackets, or braces supporting the low-pitched gable roofs.

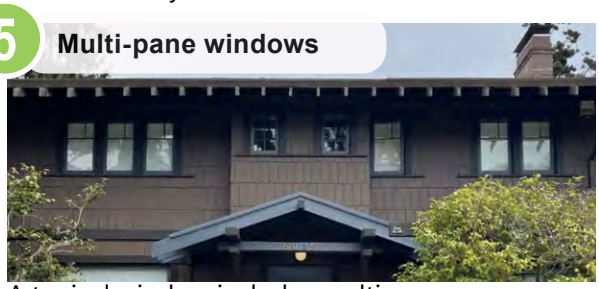
3 Extended columns or column bases

Continuous columns or bases, extending uninterrupted to the ground. Porch posts are typically tapered. The lower portion of a wall are often battered or sloped near the ground.

4 Deep front porches

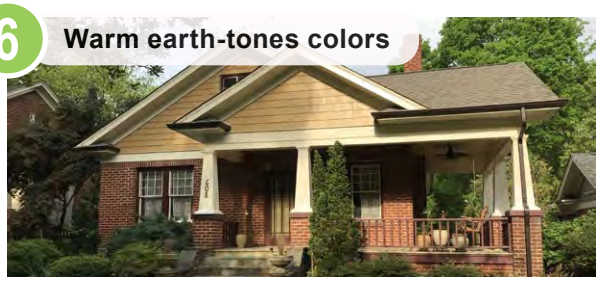
Wide, deep front porches. They may be included under the main roofline and are frequently the full width of the main facade.

5 Multi-pane windows



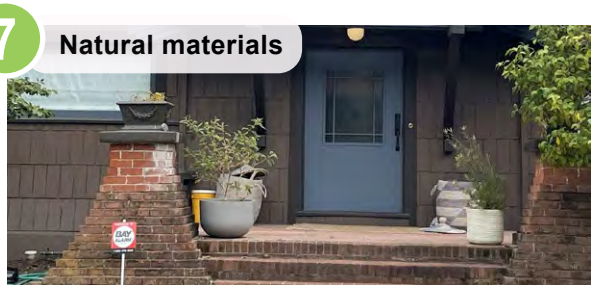
A typical window includes multi-pane upper sashes paired with a single pane in the lower sash. Transom windows are also common.

6 Warm earth-tones colors



Colors are often earth-toned, with dark wood stains.

7 Natural materials



Wood shingle, clapboard, or stucco siding, both for structural purposes and as decorative elements. Stone is usually laid in random pattern similar to the texture of cobblestones.

Photo Sources (Left Page):
1. https://www.oldhouseonline.com
2. Raimi + Associates
3. Raimi + Associates
4. Raimi + Associates
5. Raimi + Associates
6. https://preservationgreensboro.org
7. Raimi + Associates

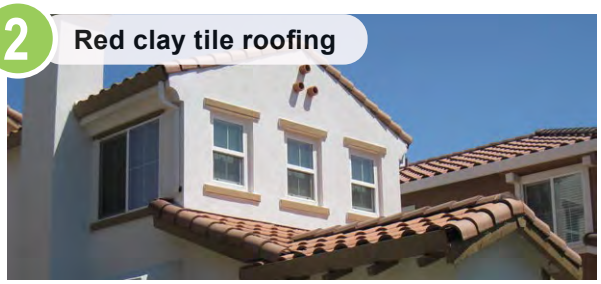
B. Spanish Revival

Spanish Revival style was inspired by the architecture of Spain and Latin America, emphasizing their rich stylistic details. Its roots can be traced to the Panama-California Exposition held in 1915, where the style gained national attention due to its romantic reinterpretation of colonial Spanish structures. It quickly became prevalent across warm climates such as California and Florida. This architectural style draws heavily from both Mediterranean and Mission Revival styles, incorporating their quintessential features like terracotta tiles and wrought iron detailing. Some of the key characteristics of Spanish Revival style architecture include:

1 Stucco exterior walls

Wall surfaces are coated in stucco, which gives the structure a clean look. Walls are usually painted white with the intent to reflect the sun.

2 Red clay tile roofing



Red clay tile roofs are a signature feature. Apart from their visual appeal, they provide insulation.

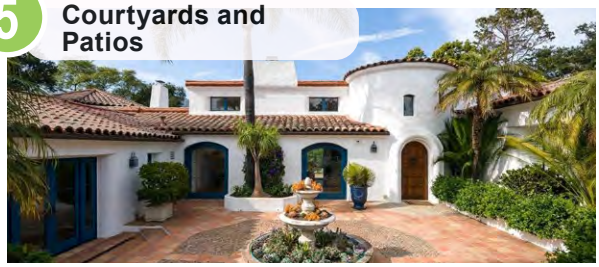
3 Porches and Balconies

Porches and balconies are often adorned with wrought iron railings and arches.

4 Asymmetrical massing

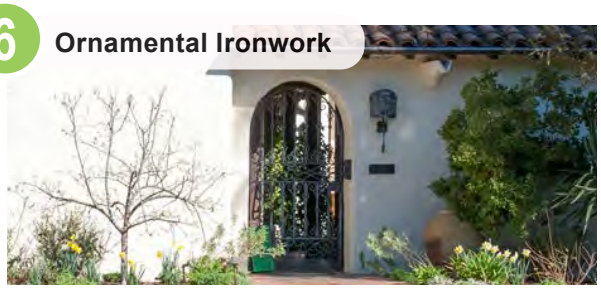
Asymmetrical massing approach creates a more organic form that adds to the visual appeal and is often combined with irregular rooflines and varied building volumes.

5 Courtyards and Patios



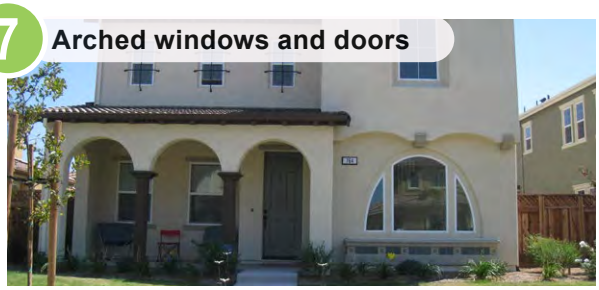
Open-air spaces in the form of courtyards and patios create a seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

6 Ornamental Ironwork



Decorative iron detailing adds elegance and craftsmanship, with intricate designs on gates, railings, and light fixtures.

7 Arched windows and doors



Doors and windows are usually arched. Soft arches create inviting entries and allow light to flow gracefully into interior spaces.

8 Towers and Turrets

Towers serve as striking focal points, often featuring arched windows or decorative iron details. They enhance the building's silhouette, adding height and a sense of grandeur.

Photo Sources (Left Page):
1. Raimi + Associates
2. Raimi + Associates
3. Raimi + Associates
4. https://carolwoodre.com
5. https://www.montecito-estate.com/
6. Pinterest
7. Raimi + Associates
8. Raimi + Associates

C. Mid-Century/Ranch

Mid-Century Ranch style architecture originated in the 1930s, flourished in the 1940s and1950s, and was a bridge between the International Style and earlier traditional styles including the Prairie style. It is characterized by its simple, functional design, its use of modern materials, and its emphasis on open space and natural light. Ranch homes are typically one-story, with low-pitched roofs, large windows, and attached garages. Ranch homes are often built on large lots, with plenty of space for outdoor living. This style is typically applicable to single-family residential. Some of the key characteristics of Mid-century/Ranch style architecture include:

1 Minimalist design

Clean lines and open spaces epitomize the minimalist approach to design.

2 Low-pitched roofs with wide overhangs

Single-story, wide massing is characteristic of Ranch homes. The full width of a Ranch house faces the street.

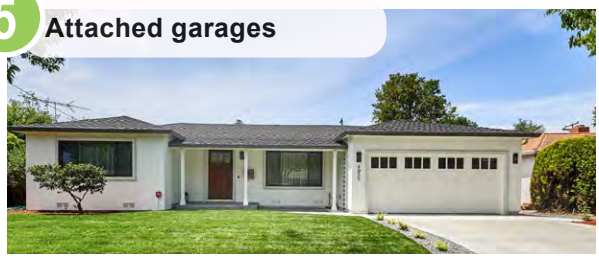
3 Asymmetrical design

The use of front-facing gables and the irregular placement of windows and doors all contribute to the general asymmetry typical to the style.

4 Picture windows

Ranch houses typically have at least one large picture window in the front of the house.

5 Attached garages



Ranch homes typically incorporate attached garages or carports.

6 Sheltered entrances

Entrance doors are thoughtfully placed under porches (integrated into the main roofline) or wide overhanging eaves.

7 Indoor-outdoor flow

The seamless integration of the indoor and outdoor space with sliding doors leading to patios.

8 Natural materials

The use of organic materials like wood, brick, and stone adds warmth and authenticity to the overall aesthetic.

Photo Sources (Left Page):

1. https://brickandbatten.com
2. https://sanjoserealestatelosgatoshomes.com
3. https://isarchitecture.com
4. Raimi + Associates
5. https://www.archstudioinc.com
6. https://sanjoserealestatelosgatoshomes.com
7. https://paragoncb.com
8. https://contemporist.com

D. Victorian

Victorian architecture is a collection of architectural revival styles from the mid-to-late 19th century. It emerged in California in the late 1800s, influenced by the elaborate and ornate design trends of the era. It is distinguished by its unapologetic emphasis on ornamentation and flourish, as well as its ornate maximalist interior design. Some of the key characteristics of Victorian style architecture include:

1 Steeply Pitched Roofs

Steeped rooflines often feature multiple gables, with some roofs featuring dormer windows. This feature adds a dramatic flair and height to the structure.

2 Ornamentation

Intricate and ornamental detailing around windows, doors, and eaves emphasize craftsmanship and add a sense of opulence.

3 Bay Windows

Windows extend outward from the house, providing panoramic views and allowing more natural light to enter the interior.

4 Wraparound Porches

Expansive porches, with decorative columns and railings, encourage relaxation and socializing. They provide a seamless connection between the interior and exterior spaces.

5 Tall and Narrow Windows

Tall and narrow windows, often adorned with shutters or stained glass, add to the vertical emphasis of the design.

6 Turrets and Towers

Some homes include round or polygonal turrets or towers, which further enhance the verticality and complexity of the design.

Photo Sources (Left Page):
1. Adobe Stock
2. Raimi + Associates
3. Raimi + Associates
4. Raimi + Associates
5. Raimi + Associates
6. New York Times

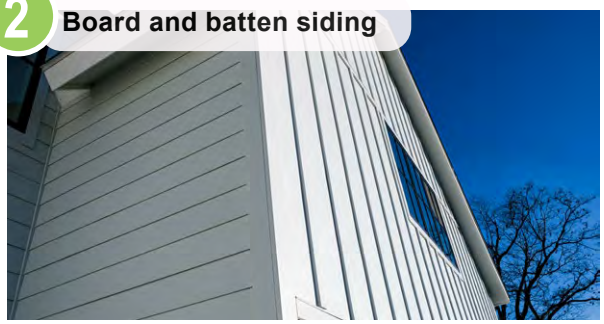
E. Modern Farmhouse

Modern Farmhouse architecture evolved from traditional rural farmhouses in the American countryside, blending their rustic charm with sleek and minimalist design. Popularized in recent decades, it offers a comfortable yet sophisticated style, merging timeless warmth with contemporary elements. Some of the key characteristics of Modern Farmhouse style architecture include:

1 Steeply pitched gable roofs

Steeply pitched gable roofs are a hallmark feature, these are often constructed with metal roofing for durability, a contemporary aesthetic, and resistance to weather.

2 Board and batten siding



Wide vertical planks with narrow battens create texture and give the home a rustic and barn-inspired look.

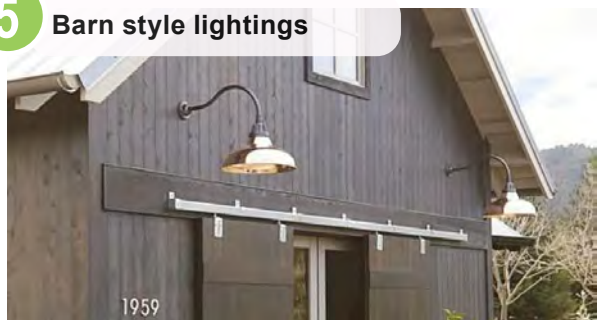
3 Large Windows

Generously sized windows and glass doors bring in natural light and connect the interior.

4 Covered Porches

Covered front or back porches extend living spaces outdoors and are often styled with natural wood or painted decking, adding charm and functionality to the home.

5 Barn style lightings



Industrial-style lighting, metal fixtures, and vintage-inspired hardware are commonly used.

6 Carriage-style Garage Doors

Carriage-style garage doors evoke classic barn doors, they typically include curved windows and one diagonal piece, or two diagonal pieces of wood attached to them.

Photo Sources (Left Page):
1. Adobe Stock
2. Adobe Stock
3. Larsen development company
4. https://luxesource.com/
5. https://ctinstyle.com/
6. https://coastoverheaddoor.com

Appendix B

ODS Evaluation Tool

The tool included in this Appendix allows jurisdictions to establish Objective Design Standards for their communities, as outlined in Chapter 3.

Appendix B: ODS Evaluation Tool

Design Topics	STEP 1: Prioritize		STEP 2: Know Your Code		STEP 3: Pick Your Approach	STEP 4: Select your Design Standards
	Community Priority (Very High, High, Medium Low)	**Identify Key Design Elements**	**Zoning Code Reference**	**Zoning Code Summary**	**Approach(es)**	**Prepare Draft Standard(s)**
2.1 Single-Family Residential and Missing Middle Housing Types						
2.1.1 Subdivision Design and Circulation						
A. Block Size and Connectivity	*e.g. High*	*e.g. set maximum block length and avoid cul-de-sacs*	*e.g. Not addressed in Zoning*	*e.g. Not addressed in Zoning*	*e.g. Numerical*	*e.g. Block lengths shall be no greater than 500 feet.*
B. Street Design						
C. Solar Orientation						
D. Habitat and Tree Preservation						
2.1.2 Building Design						
A. Missing Middle Housing Types						
Small-lot Detached Housing						
Duplexes, Triplexes and Quadplexes						
Cottage Clusters						
Courtyard Housing						
Rowhouses/Townhomes						
B. Building Elements						
Entries and Weather Protection						
Garages						
Windows						
Roofs						
Materials and Colors						
Adjacency and Privacy						
Architectural Variability for Subdivisions						
Architectural Styles						
2.1.3 Site Design and Elements						
A. Site Elements						
Fences and Walls						
Trees and Landscaping						
Site Lighting						

Design Topics	STEP 1: Prioritize		STEP 2: Know Your Code		STEP 3: Pick Your Approach	STEP 4: Select your Design Standards
	Community Priority (Very High, High, Medium Low)	**Identify Key Design Elements**	**Zoning Code Reference**	**Zoning Code Summary**	**Approach(es)**	**Prepare Draft Standard(s)**
2.2 Multifamily Residential and Mixed Use						
2.2.1 Site Design and Circulation						
A. Pedestrian Connectivity						
Block Size						
Street Network and Connectivity						
On-site Pedestrian Pathways						
B. Vehicle Access and Parking						
Vehicle Access and Curb Cuts						
Parking Location						
Surface Parking Lots						
Structured Parking						
C. Utilities, Equipment and Service Areas						
D. Sustainable Design Features						
2.2.2 Building Design						
A. Modulation and Articulation						
Building and Massing Breaks						
Façade Design						
Articulation						
Corner Treatments						
Fenestration						
B. Ground Floor Design						
Non-Residential Ground Floors						
Residential Ground Floors						
C. Building Elements						
Building Entries						
Weather Protection						
Materials and Colors						
D. Privacy						
Adjacency to Neighboring Properties						
2.2.3 Open Space and Site Elements						
A. Public Open Space						
Publicly-Accessible Common Open Space						
B. Private Open Areas						
Private Common Open Areas						
Private Personal Open Areas						
C. Fences and Walls						
D. Landscaping						
E. Site Lighting						