

Multifamily and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards

Planning Commission Study
Session, October 28, 2025



Agenda



1.

PROJECT WELCOME

2.

PREVIOUS DISCUSSION

3.

SAMPLE ODS REVIEW

4.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Project Welcome





WELCOME

PROJECT TEAM



- **Luke Connolly**

- Assistant Director of Community Development, City of Cupertino

- **Piu Ghosh**

- Planning Manager, City of Cupertino

- **Greg Goodfellow**

- Senior Associate II, PlaceWorks

- **Charlie Knox**

- Principal, PlaceWorks



CUPERTINO



PLACEWORKS

Previous Discussion



Previous PC Study Sessions



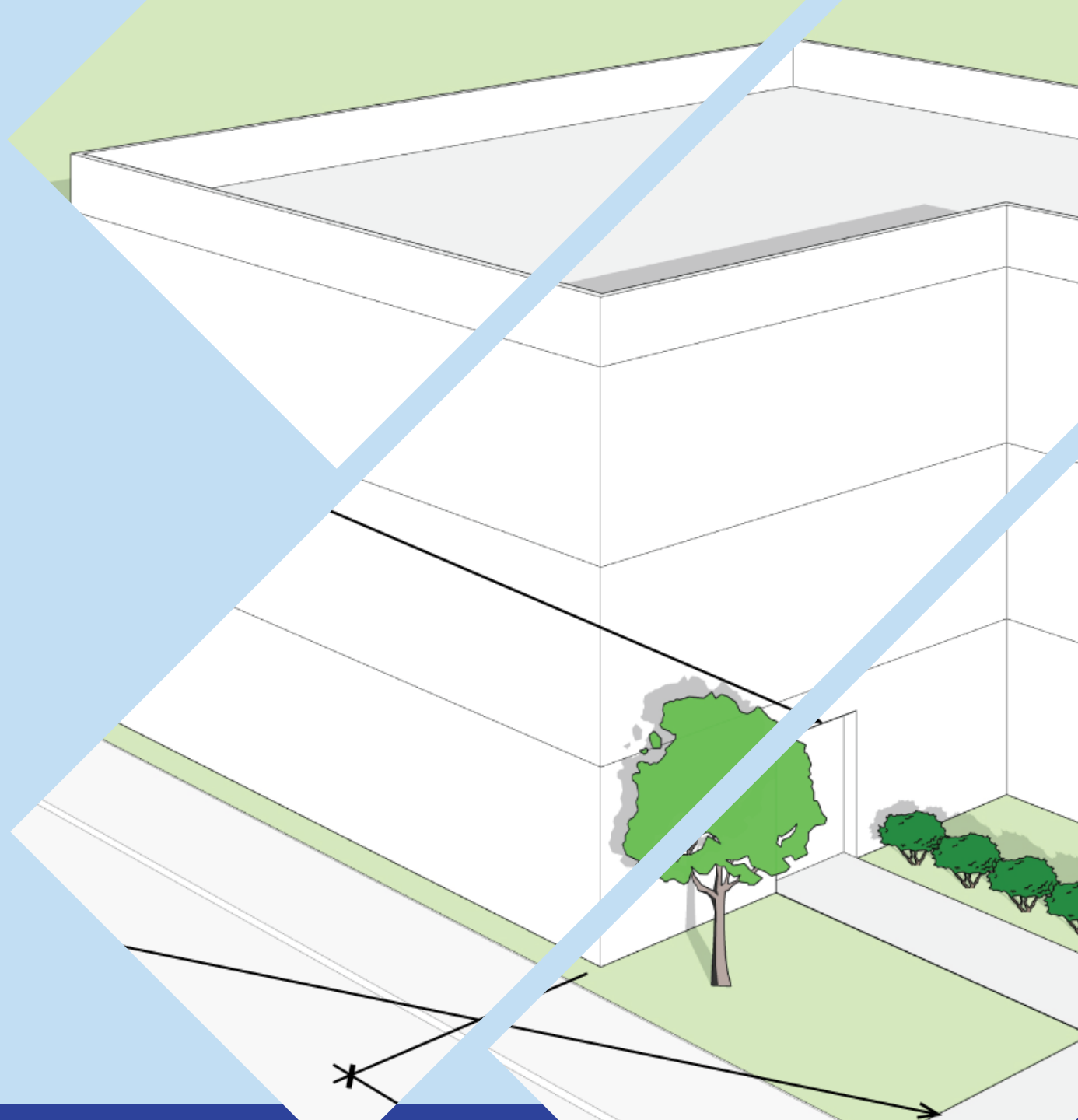
■ May 13, 2025

- » Introduce ODS project and review community design preferences.
- » Discuss and document Planning Commission residential design priorities.
- » **PC direction:** Develop sample ODS based on design feedback.

■ July 22, 2025

- » Review package of potential ODS developed in response to five PC design priorities.
- » **PC direction:** Compile summaries of adopted local ODS, including approach, formatting and public outreach process.

Sample ODS Review



City of Sunnyvale

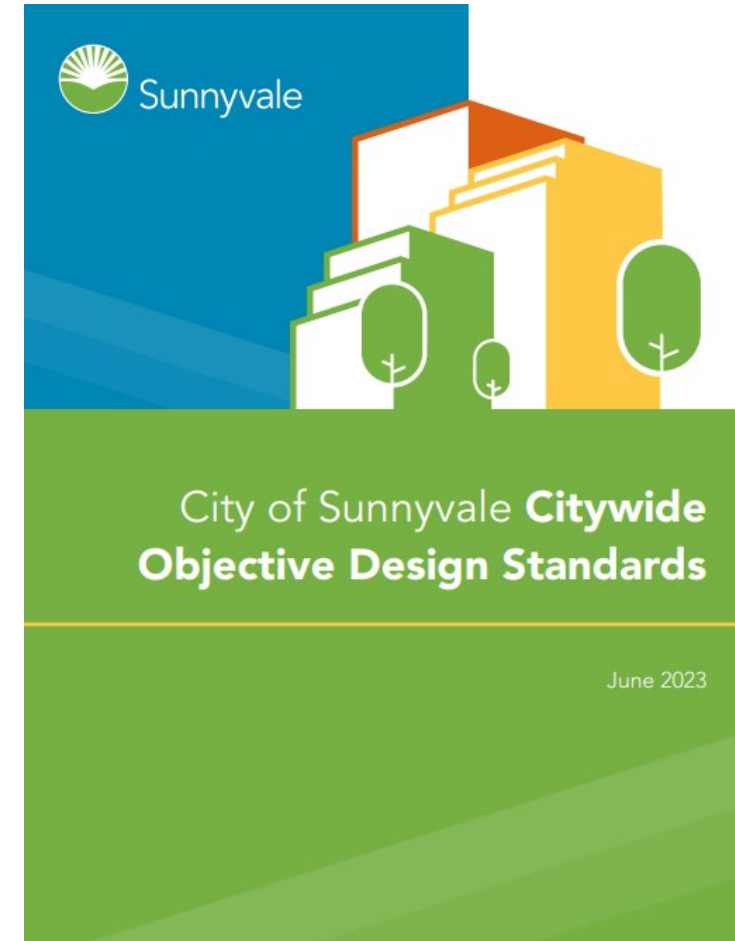


Background Information

- Adoption date: June 2023
- Publication method: stand-alone document
- Applies to multifamily residential, mixed-use residential, and supportive/transitional housing

Outreach Summary (2021-2023)

- Virtual Public Meeting: ODS Education
- Virtual Public Meeting: Design Insights
- (1) Virtual Stakeholder Focus Group: Developers and Architects
- (1) Joint PC/CC Study Session



City of Sunnyvale



ODS Approaches and Formats

- Text only standards
- Tabular quantities and requirements
- Selective lists
- Point-base scoring
- 2D diagrams
- 3D diagrams
- Photographs

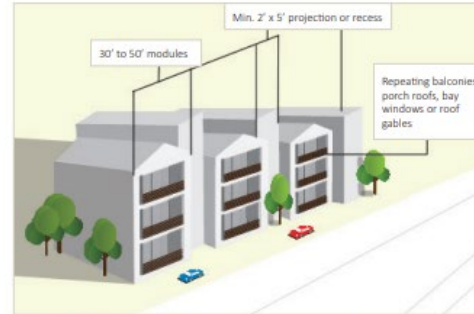


Figure 3-4 Division of building length; low-rise buildings.

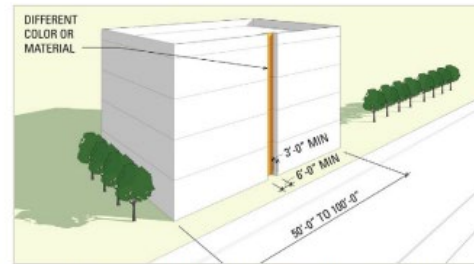


Figure 3-5 Division of building length; 50' to 100'-wide mid- and high-rise buildings.

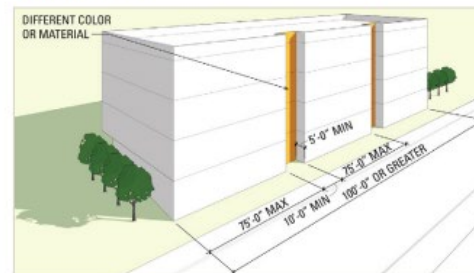


Figure 3-6 Division of building length; 100' or wider mid- and high-rise buildings.

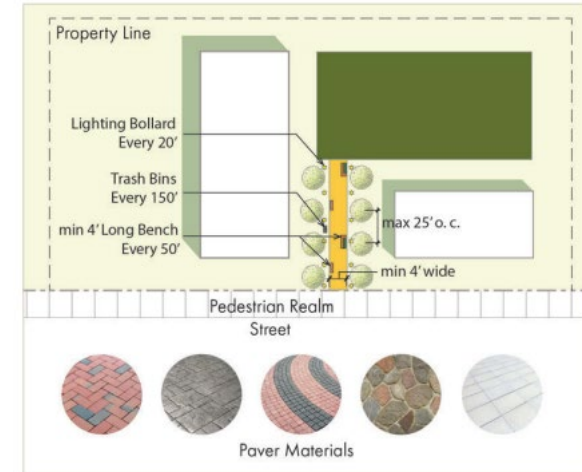


Figure 6-2 Externally accessible open space and pathway design.

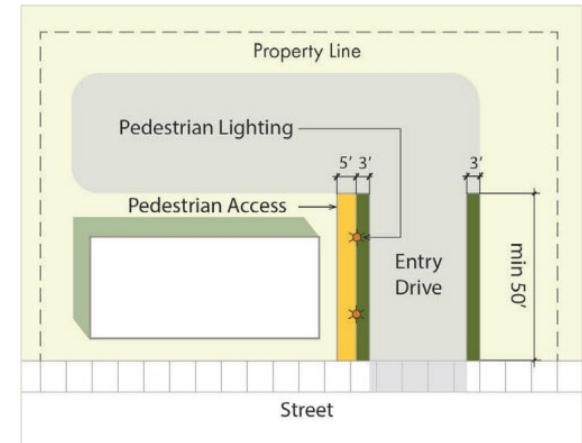


Figure 5-2 Parking access standards: Interior surface lot.

City of San Mateo



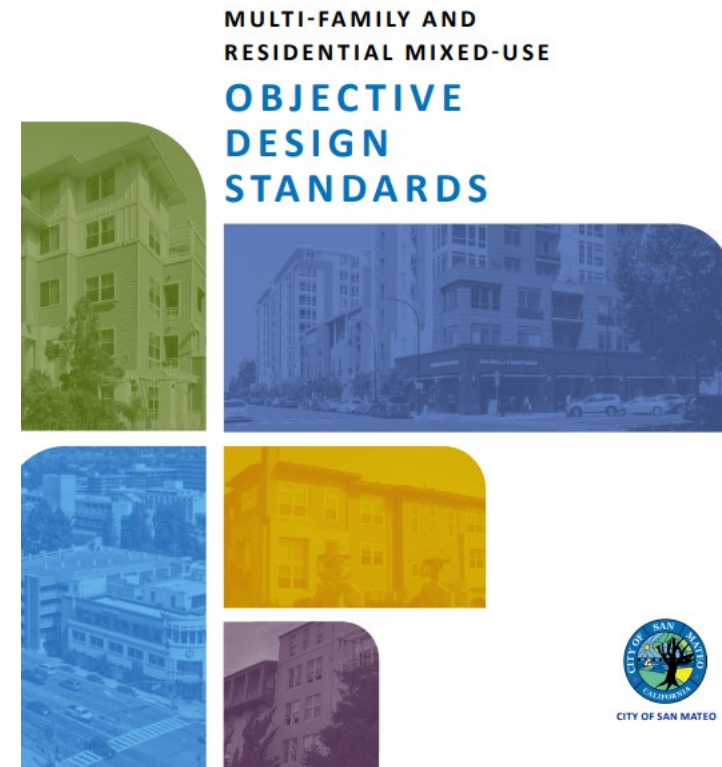
December 2023

Background Information

- Adoption date: December 2023
- Publication method: Stand-alone document
- Applies to new multi-family development, new mixed-use residential development, and additions to multi-family and residential mixed-use development

Outreach Summary (2021-2023)

- Community Workshop: ODS Education
- Community Workshop: Design Input
- (2) Planning Commission Study Sessions
- Developer Roundtable
- Joint PC/CC Study Session



City of San Mateo

ODS Approaches and Formats

- Text only standards
- Text associated with labeled & illustrated photographs
- 2D diagrams
- 3D diagrams
- Selective lists

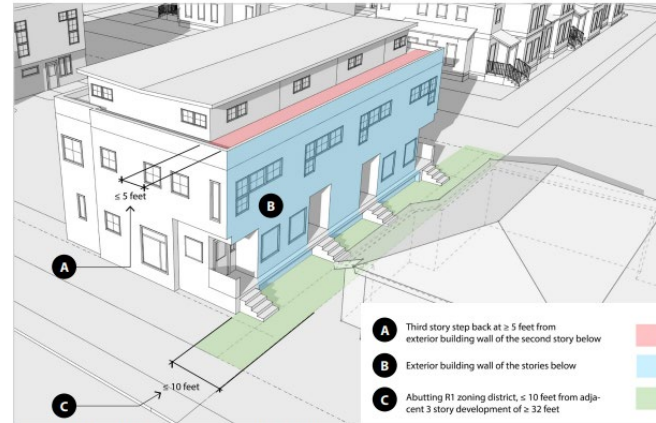


Figure 35: Illustrated Low-rise Stepback (Section 4.4.1.A)



Figure 29: Examples of massing breaks in mid-rise buildings (Section 4.1.6.C)



Figure 33: Ground floor commercial uses shall be at least 12 feet in height. (Section 4.2.1.B)



Figure 10: Pedestrian paths on private property are clearly delineated with colored concrete. (Section: 3.1.1.B)



Figure 11: Public pedestrian paths shall be a minimum of six (6) feet wide. (Section: 3.1.1.A)

Background Information

- Adoption date: 2022
- Publication method: Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 18.24
- Applies to multifamily housing with three or more units, supportive and transitional housing, residential mixed-use with at least two-thirds residential square footage

Outreach Summary (2021-2023)

- Architectural Review Board (ARB) review sessions

[CA](#) > [Palo A...](#) > [Palo Alto Municipal...](#) > Chapter 18.24 Contextual Design Criteria and Objective Design St...



Chapter 18.24

Contextual Design Criteria and Objective Design Standards

Sections:

- [18.24.010](#) Purpose and Applicability
- [18.24.020](#) Public Realm/Sidewalk Character
- [18.24.030](#) Site Access
- [18.24.040](#) Building Orientation and Setbacks
- [18.24.050](#) Building Massing
- [18.24.060](#) Façade Design
- [18.24.070](#) Residential Entries
- [18.24.080](#) Open Space
- [18.24.090](#) Materials
- [18.24.100](#) Sustainability and Green Building Design

City of Palo Alto



Figure 1: Illustrative Sidewalk Section and Description of Zones

ODS Approaches and Formats

- Text only standards
- Tabular quantities
- 2D diagrams
- 3D diagrams



Mixed-Use Frontage

Residential Frontage



Sample 4: Foster City



City of Foster City

Background Information

- Adoption date: September 2024
- Publication method: Stand-alone ODS User Guide
- Applies to new multifamily development & new mixed-use development

Outreach Summary (2021-2024)

- Public Study Session
- Urban Design Data Walk
- PC Study Session



FOSTER CITY

Multi-Family Residential

Objective Design Standards
User Guide

September 2024

Site Design and Development Standards (17.96.040)

Site Access (17.96.040.A)

Standard 17.96.040.A.1: Pedestrian Access

a. Multi-family and mixed-use residential/commercial development shall provide access to public streets and public amenities through the use of private or public pedways.



Pedestrian path providing access along Lagoon frontage and connection to public street.

b. Pedestrian access to public streets, dwelling units located at site interiors, and public amenities shall be designed subject to the following standards:

(A) The minimum width of the land area between buildings containing the pedestrian access shall be measured from the face of buildings fronting both sides of the connection.

(B) The minimum width dimension per subsection (b.i.(A)), above, shall be at least 25% of the sum of the tallest building heights fronting each side of the connection; or 18 feet, whichever is greater. See Figure 2.



Minimum 10' paved walkway at ground floor commercial between face of building and edge of walkway.



Paseo width shall be not less than 25% x sum of adjacent building heights. In this example wall heights 50' + 50' = 100; 25% x 100 = 25' minimum width between building walls.

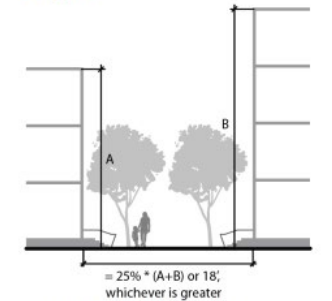


Figure 2: Minimum Width for Pedestrian Access

MULTI-FAMILY AND MIXED-USE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS USERS' GUIDE

3

Sample 4: Foster City



ODS Approaches and Formats

- Text only standards
- Labeled photographs
- 2D diagrams/site plans
- 3D diagrams
- Selective lists



Paseo width shall be not less than 25% x sum of adjacent building heights. In this example wall heights 50' + 50' = 100; 25% x 100 = 25' minimum width between building walls.



Figure 2: Minimum Width for Pedestrian Access

2. The length of the stepback shall be as follows. See Figure 18, below.

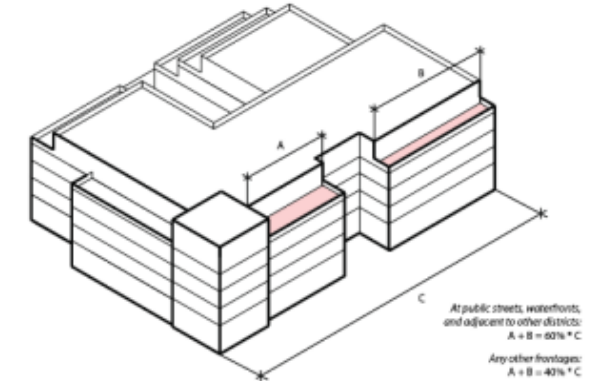


Figure 18: Upper Story Stepback Length

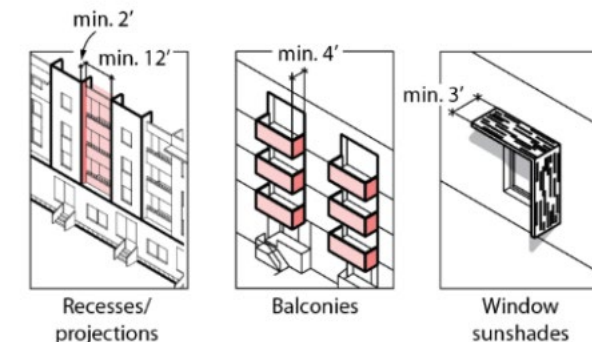


Figure 21: Horizontal Articulation Options

City of Los Gatos



Background Information

- Adoption date: January 2023 (updated)
- Publication method: stand-alone document
- Applies to multifamily development, residential mixed-use with minimum two-thirds of SF designated residential, supportive and transitional housing development

Outreach Summary (2021-2023)

- Community Meeting: Preliminary Topics
- Community Meeting: Draft Standards
- (2) PC Study Sessions prior to Draft ODS Review



TOWN OF LOS GATOS OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR QUALIFYING MULTI-FAMILY AND MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT Updated January 31, 2023

PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

The purpose of the Objective Design Standards is to ensure that new qualifying projects in Los Gatos provide high-quality architecture, integrate with surrounding development, and include well-designed amenities and outdoor areas to enhance community character. These standards are intended to guide property owners, applicants, developers, and design professionals by providing clear design direction that enhances the Town's unique character and ensures a high-quality living environment.

California Government Code Section 65559.5 identifies Qualifying Housing Development Projects to include:

- Multi-family housing developments;
- Residential Mixed-Use Housing developments with a minimum of two-thirds of the square footage designated for residential use; or
- Supportive and transitional housing development.

A Qualifying Housing Development Project shall be approved through a streamlined, ministerial review process when the project complies with these Objective Design Standards as well as complying with all existing objective development regulations in the Town, including but not limited to the following:

- General Plan;
- Town Code;
- Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams;
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan;
- Parks and Public Works Standards; and
- Santa Clara County Fire Department Requirements.

These standards are only to be used for review of qualifying projects where Town review, approval, and/or denial is limited to only objective design standards. Many projects will proceed through the standard review process, in which case the objective design standards included herein would not apply.

ORGANIZATION

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

City of Los Gatos



ODS Approaches and Formats

- Text only standards
- 2D diagrams/site plans
- 3D diagrams

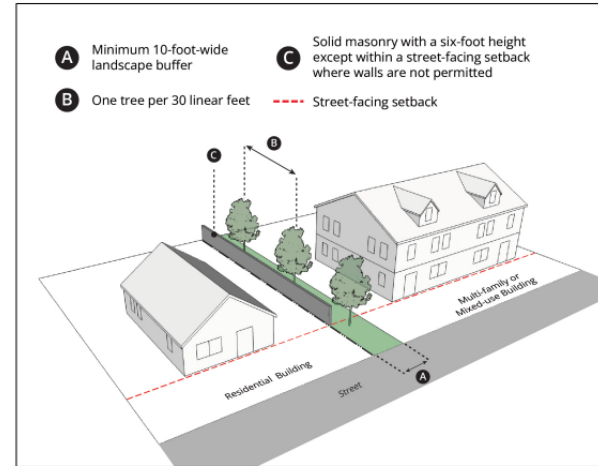


Figure A.7.2a

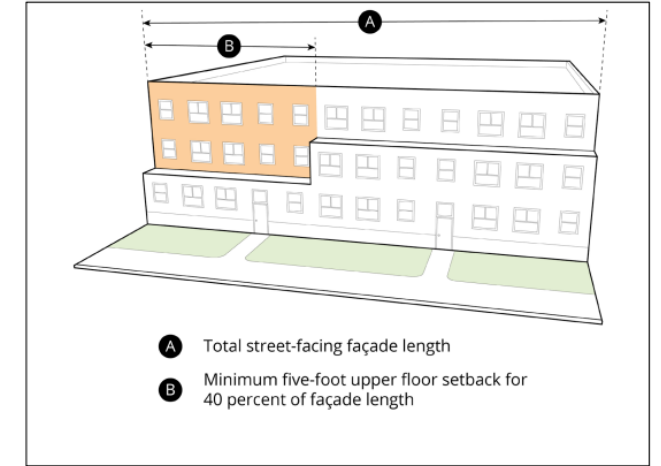


Figure B.1.1a



Figure A.11.1

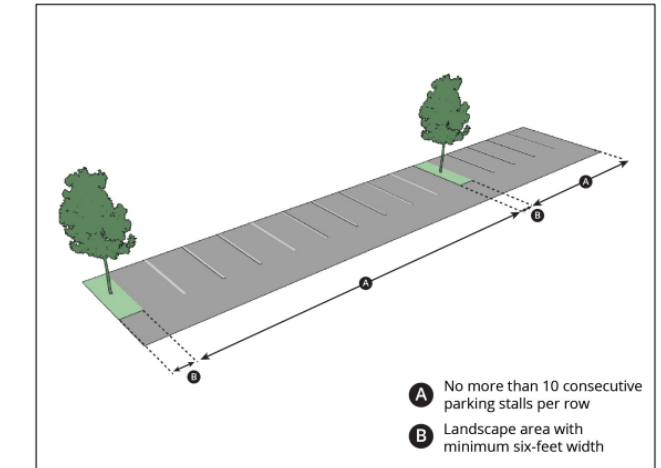
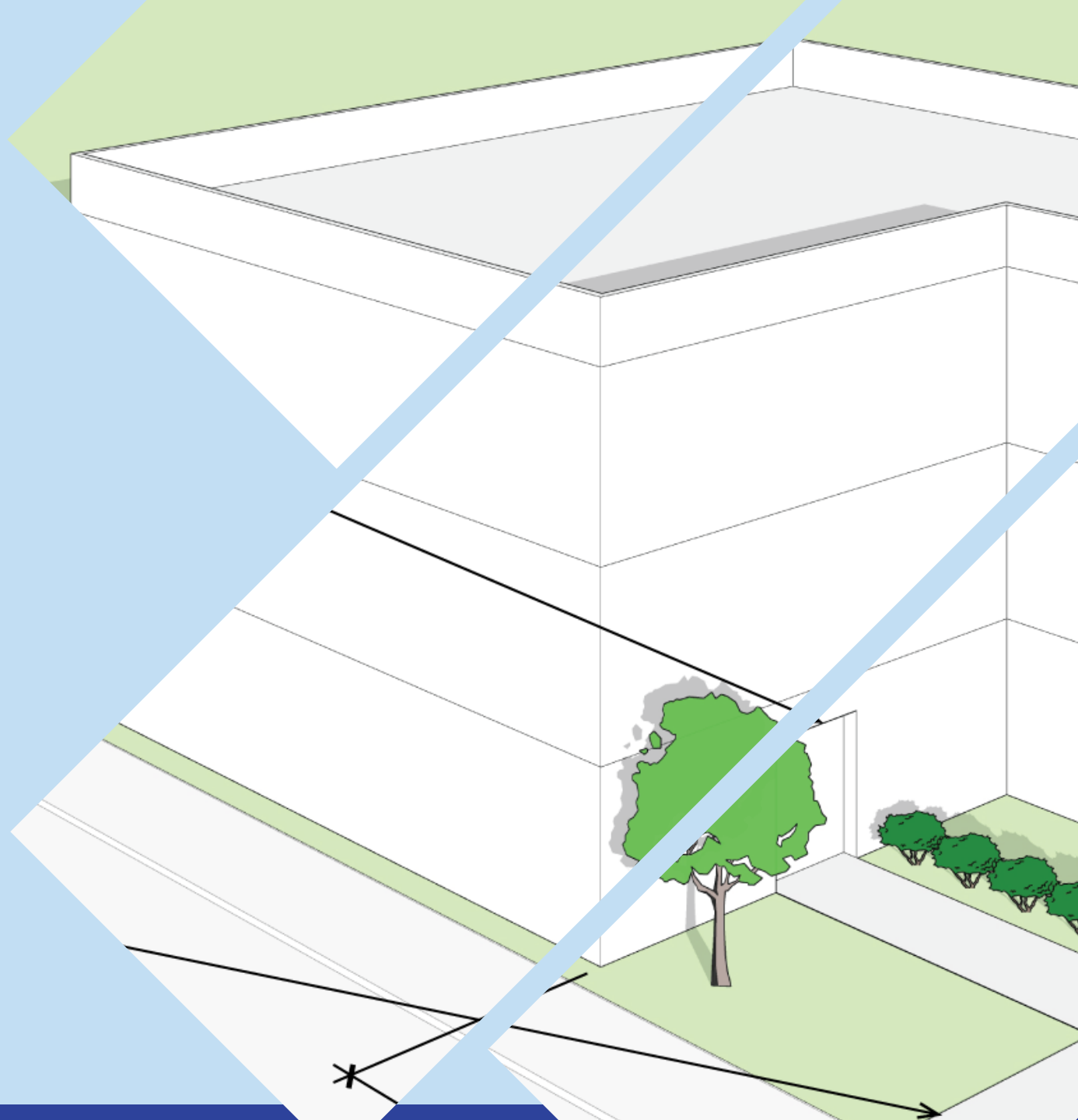


Figure A.4.2

Planning Commission Discussion



Planning Commission Discussion



■ Local examples of ODS

1. Format
2. Outreach
3. Approaches

■ Project Direction

1. Review Administrative Draft ODS before City Council review
2. Review revised sample package based on July 22, 2025 PC feedback and additional detail before City Council review
3. Other

Multifamily and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards

Planning Commission Study
Session, October 28, 2025

