

WORKING DRAFT

[Contents](#) - *The previous draft of guidelines and core principles can be found at this link*

Assignments KEY-

David

Marissa

Kevin

Brendan

Sophia

Introduction

PURPOSE

APPLICABILITY

These categories determine if a project must comply with a specific design guideline.

Private Projects ▾

Applies to:

- All projects participating in the **Downtown Density Bonus Program (DDBP)**, and
- All private projects for which the City Council or the Planning Commission requests a review by the Design Commission. The applicability extends to these projects regardless of their participation in a density bonus program. The Design Commission will advise the Planning Commission and City Council based on the values and intent of the Urban Design Guidelines as is applicable or appropriate to the project. .

Public Projects ▾

Applies to all municipal buildings and associated site development including any components of these projects that include Alternative Equivalent Compliance.

The Design Commission reviews **all municipal buildings and associated site development projects** to ensure they demonstrate compliance with city design and sustainability standards ([Council Resolution No. 20071129-046](#)), including those seeking **Subchapter E Design Standards Alternative Equivalent Compliance (AEC)** ([Council Resolution No. 20100923-086](#)).

Public Infrastructure ▾

Applies to all infrastructure projects commissioned by the City of Austin. ([Resolution 20100819-035](#))

All projects requiring a **right-of-way vacation** are required to be reviewed by the Design Commission ([Council Resolution No. 20100805-028](#)).

Infrastructure is the constructed physical and biophysical elements, facilities, and systems of the built environment that provide a shared foundation for sustaining the health, safety, and welfare of a community. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, the following aspects of

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planning and design: air quality management, communication, energy production and transmission (chemical, electrical, mechanical, and thermal), public safety (support for policing and fire suppression), transportation and movement, waste management (refuse recycling and disposal; sewage treatment), and water management (storage, conveyance, distribution, purification).

SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE

In order for a project to be considered in *Substantial Compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines*, projects must address each core principle by complying with **All** Tier 1 Design Guidelines applicable to their project type as well as **12** of the Tier 2 Design Guidelines applicable to their project type.

PRIORITIES

Tier 1 ▾

Tier 1 indicates design guidelines that are mandatory. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with all Tier 1 Guidelines applicable to their project type.

Tier 2 ▾

Tier 2 indicates design guidelines that are optional but highly recommended. Applicants may choose which Tier 2 guidelines they want to comply with in order for their project to be considered in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.

VALUES

blurb about design guidelines and projects that are not required to comply being reviewed according to these values

Climate & Environment ▾

Uphold the fundamental human right to clean, healthy, and adequate air, water, land, food, education, transportation, safety, and housing by minimizing the harmful effects of new development on human health and the environment.

Mobility & Connectivity ▾

Plan for reducing dependence on single-occupant vehicles, increasing comfortable, convenient, and safe multimodal transportation options, improving sidewalk and street connectivity, and transitioning our rights-of-way to focus on active transportation and transit infrastructure. Urban development best supports sustainability and equity goals where it promotes walking, biking, and transit use. This requires

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that urban places provide safe, comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable environments for pedestrians and cyclists.

Equity & Affordability ▾

Lower and stabilize costs related to basic living needs (housing, food, utilities, healthcare, transportation, etc.) for low-income communities and communities of color and eliminate disparities that can be predicted by race.

Cultural Preservation ▾

Deliberately and respectfully honor culture and history to increase the visibility and safeguard current cultures and cultural heritage. This includes the preservation and representation of cultural artifacts, traditions, languages, and practices that are considered valuable and significant.

Health, Safety, Welfare ▾

Offer beneficial physical, mental, and emotional effects to all users of the built environment and public realm.

Design Excellence ▾

Uphold design standards that include: functionality, durability, beautiful design, creativity, contextual response, sustainability, good business, and legacy.

Adaptability & Resilience ▾

Enhance the ability of a building to both prevent and recover from damage as well as the ability to accommodate substantial change over the lifetime of the building.

INTENT

Intent describes the desired outcome of each guideline so that applicants may have a better understanding of how to design for compliance using solutions that best fit their specific project.

CONDITIONS

Conditions identify specific criteria that each project must meet in order to achieve compliance with an individual guideline. Conditions serve to help applicants more easily determine compliance, while also creating a more predictable review process. In addition to directive language like “provide” or “must”, conditions occasionally include “should” statements. For guidelines or portions of guidelines with directive language, applicants must show compliance with these conditions or show that compliance with the condition was met to the greatest extent practical given unique site conditions. For guidelines or portions of guidelines including suggesting language like “should”, applicants are expected to address the guideline unless infeasible, unnecessary, or inappropriate. Compliance with a guideline may be considered even where projects are unable to comply with the guideline conditions. These projects must show that their alternative design meets the intent of the guideline in a manner that is equal to or better than would be achieved following the specified conditions.

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EXAMPLES

Examples of compliance are provided for each guideline to assist the applicant in better understanding design solutions that would result in compliance of that guideline. Applicants are not required to use the examples given; they are provided as references only.

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SUMMARY TABLE

Priority	Applicability			#	Guideline Title
	Pub	Priv	Infra		
Core Principle A- Protect Pedestrians From the Elements					
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A1	Protect Pedestrians and Bicyclists from Amplified Wind
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A2	Protect Pedestrians from Precipitation
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A3	Protect Sidewalk and Bikeway Users From the Sun and Heat
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A4	Design to Mitigate Heat Island Effect
Core Principle B- Protect Sidewalk and Bikeway Users From Motor Vehicles					
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B1	Minimize the Impact of Vehicular Access on the Streetscape and Curb Lane
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B2	Provide Driveway and Intersection Design That Clearly Indicates and Enforces Sidewalk and Bikeway Users Have the Right Of Way
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B3	Minimize Crossing Distances and Exposure
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B4	Provide Self-Enforcing Physical Barriers Between Motor Vehicles and Sidewalk and Bikeways
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B5	Slow Motor Vehicles to Safe Speeds Using Environmental Design
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B6	Ensure Visibility of Bicyclists and Pedestrians Especially at Intersections, Curb Cuts, and Areas of Modal Conflict
Core Principle C- Activate & Engage the Public Realm					
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C1	Provide a Mix of Building Uses that Foster Vibrancy and Activity
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C2	Provide Frequent, Sheltered, and Architecturally Enhanced Street-Facing Entrances
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C3	Provide High Levels of Transparency on Street-Facing Ground Floor Facades
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C4	Provide an Urban Street Wall with Active Pedestrian Uses along the sidewalk
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C5	Provide Indoor-Outdoor Uses
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C6	Hide Parking, Loading, Mechanical Equipment, and Utilities
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C5	Direct Pedestrians and Building User Movements to Street Level
Core Principle D- Support Public Safety Through Environmental Design					
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D1	Provide Upper Floor Transparency
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D2	Provide Active Uses on Upper Floors Overlooking the Street
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D3	Provide Upper Floor Indoor/Outdoor Spaces, Balconies, & Terraces
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D4	Provide Pedestrian Scaled Lighting
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D5	Maintain Visual Acuity Within the Public Realm
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D6	Clearly Demarcate Private Space from Public Space

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Core Principle E- Enhance the Public Realm and Elevate the Walking, Biking, and Transit User Experience

Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E1	Provide Mid-Block Pedestrian Passages
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E2	Provide A Wide Pedestrian Clear Zone
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E3	Provide a Wide Planting Zone
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E4	Provide a Direct Connection Between the Sidewalk and Building Entrances
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E5	Use High-Quality, Local, & Pedestrian-Friendly Materials at Street Level
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E6	Curate the Bicycle User Experience
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E7	Provide Street Furniture
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E8	Enhance Transit Stops
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E9	Provide Art In the Public Realm
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E10	Provide a Publicly Accessible Restroom and/or Drinking Fountain
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E11	Provide Inclusive Open Space
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E12	Create a Sense of Enclosure Around the Sidewalk
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E13	Design Buildings for the Human-Scale

Core Principle F- Promote Sustainability and Ecosystem Health

Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F1	Provide a Significant Landscaped Area Designed to Promote Ecosystem Health
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	F2	Promote Access to Nature and Natural Systems
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F3	Provide Bird-Safe Design
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F4	Design for Adaptability & Resilience
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F5	Design Projects for Sustainable Construction and Building Operations
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	F6	Minimize or Eliminate Automobile Parking On-Site

Core Principle G- Respect the Cultural, Historical, Environmental, and Physical Contexts of the Site

Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	G1	Respect the Adjacent Built Environment
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G2	Amplify Austin’s History, Culture, and Character
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	G3	Respond to Daily and Seasonal Cycles of the Site
Tier 1 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G4	Further Existing City Plans and Policies
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	G5	Preserve Existing Building Facades at Street-Level
Tier 2 ▾	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	G6	Design Buildings to be Beautiful from a Distance

CORE PRINCIPLE A-

Protect Pedestrians & Bicyclists from the Elements

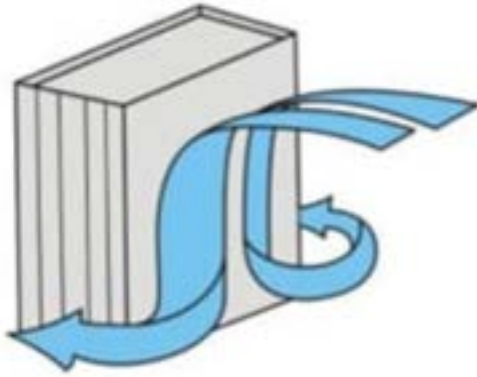
As climate change escalates, days of extreme heat and other extreme weather events will increase. Protection from these elements will become even more critical to life-safety and livability in the coming years and pedestrians and cyclists are particularly vulnerable to wind, precipitation, and sun. To make walking and biking more safe, convenient, and enjoyable, projects should be designed to protect from inclement conditions.

DESIGN GUIDELINES –

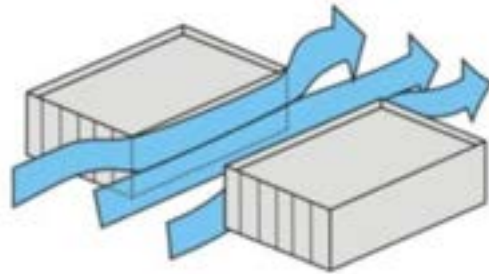
A1. Protect Pedestrians and Bicyclists from Amplified Wind

- a. **Applicability:** Public Projects and Private Projects that include mid-rise and high-rise structures
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment, Mobility & Connectivity, Equity & Affordability, Health, Safety, Welfare, Design Excellence
- d. **Intent:**
 - i. Encourage safe, comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable environments for pedestrians and cyclists by mitigating, disrupting, or minimizing amplified wind conditions such as downdraught (“downwash”), funneling (“channeling”), acceleration around corners (“Venturi Effect”), and height/speed differential while still encouraging prevailing cool breezes during warmer months.

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Downwash



Funnelling

<https://windtechconsult.com/3-top-tips-to-minimise-the-risk-of-wind-effects-derailing-your-project/>

<https://windtechconsult.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/10th-Intl-Urban-Design-Tony-Rofail.pdf>

e. Conditions-

- i. Structures with large flat facades, sharp corners, and simple geometries ***must*** include design interventions that demonstrate a detectable mitigation of wind amplification effects.
- ii. Wind amplification effects ***must*** be mitigated wherever they are likely to impact the sidewalk, bikeways, and other public outdoor amenity spaces, especially publicly accessible open spaces. All sides of the building ***must*** be considered.
- iii. On-site and off-site impacts of wind amplification ***must*** be considered.
- iv. Special attention ***should*** be paid to historical wind patterns, including prevailing wind direction, speeds, and seasonal variations.

f. Examples-

- i. Street trees that buffer against wind speeds.
- ii. Ground-level wind breaks such as vegetation, furniture, or shielding structures.
- iii. Large vertical canopies at the bottom of flat facades where downdraughts may occur.

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- iv. A large podium extending beyond the upper stories to interrupt a flat facade that may create downdraughts.
- v. Recessed, beveled, or rounded edges to reduce Venturi Effect at building corners.
- vi. ***Orienting the narrower side of a tall building to the prevailing wind*** direction helps to reduce downdraught forming
<https://windtechconsult.com/20-seriously-effective-wind-mitigation-strategies-for-your-next-project/>
- vii. ***Twisting or rounded building massing*** that redirects wind
- viii. Avoiding parallel towers that create funneling effects.
<https://www.mdpi.com/1996-1073/13/11/2827>

A2. Protect Pedestrians from Precipitation

- a. Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects**
- b. Priority: Tier **Tier 2**
- c. Values:
- Climate & Environment** **Mobility & Connectivity** **Equity & Affordability**
Health, Safety, Welfare **Design Excellence**
- d. **Intent:** Encourage safe, comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable environments for pedestrians and cyclists by providing shelter or refuge from precipitation.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. Building drip lines **must** not be located over the pedestrian clear zone or building access routes
 - ii. Sheltering Structures:
 1. **Provide** permanent overhead shelter over no less than 60% of street frontage located over or abutting the pedestrian clear zone (including parking garage entrances/exits).
 2. Sheltering structures **must** have a depth no less than 40% of the clear height
 3. Sheltering structures **must** be open to the street, maintaining access to the sidewalk from bike lanes and the curb zone. Only intermittent obstructions, such as in the case of an arcade, are allowed.
 4. Appropriate street tree species **should** be selected and maintained as required to prevent damage to sheltering structures.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Gutters to divert drip lines away from sidewalks
 - ii. Shaped or angled roofs overhanging sidewalks to shed water away from the sidewalk.
 - iii. Awnings, eyebrows, or other similar projections attached to building facades to create shelter areas at entrances and amenity areas
 - iv. Free standing shade structures at street level.
 - v. Arcades, overhangs, or cantilevers integrated into the building massing.

A3. Protect Sidewalk and Bikeway Users From the Sun and Heat

- a. Applicability: **Private Projects** ▾ **Public Projects** ▾ **Public Infrastructure** ▾
- b. Priority: Tier **Tier 1** ▾
- c. Values: **Climate & Environment** ▾ **Mobility & Connectivity** ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ **Health, Safety, Welfare** ▾ **Design Excellence** ▾
- d. **Intent:** Encourage safe, comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable environments for pedestrians and cyclists by providing a comfortable microclimate and shade at the street level.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Provide** continuous shade along the sidewalk for a minimum of 80% of the area of the sidewalk. If street trees are incorporated, one shade tree **should** be planted for every 30' of street frontage and species should be selected for shade at mature growth with appropriate clear widths and heights around the sidewalk. Where conflicting with overhead utilities, one utility-compatible tree **should** be planted for every 15' of street frontage.
 - ii. **Provide** continuous shade along bikeways for a minimum of 70% of the area of dedicated bikeways.
 - iii. Projects **should** provide a supplemental cooling effect on the sidewalk in addition to shade.
 - iv. Exceptions are not provided for required or voluntary ROW conflicts such as utilities, driveways, and valet and drop off zones
 - v. Projects with concave reflective facades **must** prevent concentrated solar radiation.
- f. **Examples-**
 - Continuous canopy of street trees at appropriate spacing
 - 1. Continuous sheltering structure over the pedestrian clear zone, at least 6' deep. Planting areas parallel to the pedestrian clear zone and bikeways with layered vegetation, properly irrigated and maintained to maximize evapotranspiration in close proximity to pedestrians and cyclists.

A4. Design to Mitigate Heat Island Effect

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Reduce overall temperature of urban areas by preventing radiant heat from the sun from being absorbed into heat sinks including buildings, roads, and other infrastructure.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. ***Provide*** 20% intensive green roof on all non-occupiable roof surfaces, excluding mechanical areas; where used, green roofs ***must*** have irrigation and a minimum of 8" of substrate.
 - ii. ***Provide*** minimum 50% shade coverage over all paved surfaces, including courtyards, occupiable roof surfaces, decks, and terraces
 - iii. Projects ***should*** utilize high-albedo materials on horizontal surfaces and building roofs, especially where not shaded by vegetation or architectural screening.
 - iv. ***Do not provide*** materials with low-albedo or high heat absorption rates, like asphalt, in publicly accessible open spaces. These materials ***should*** also be avoided in private outdoor amenity spaces.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. White roof or other high-albedo surface on rooftops
 - ii. Intensive or semi-intensive green roof using native and adapted non-invasive planting species.
 - iii. Vertical planting elements with irrigation on wall assemblies at ground floor and/or on occupied balconies and elevated courtyards
 - iv. Shade trees and/or shade structures over paved surfaces, courtyards, parking structures, and roof decks
 - v. Materials such as wood or light-colored paving in pedestrian areas to reduce glare and heat from reflected sunlight.
 - vi. Double-skin facades with outer layers made from material with low conductivity.
 - vii.

CORE PRINCIPLE B-

Protect Sidewalk and Bikeway Users From Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles pose a physical threat to the health and safety of pedestrians and cyclists and other vulnerable street users. The design of the public realm has the ability and responsibility to promote safe driver behavior and provide the appropriate barriers to protect pedestrians and cyclists from the perceived or real risk of physical harm. Development and infrastructure best support sustainability, mobility, and equity goals where their design promotes walking, biking, and transit use. This requires that urban places provide a safe, comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable, environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Protection from vehicles is critical in Austin where the predominant infrastructure design and culture reflect an auto-oriented history. This status quo prioritizes convenience for drivers over safety and usability for all other modes. This is reflected in the high rates of death and serious injury to pedestrians and cyclists in Austin compared to more walkable and transit-oriented peer cities. To disrupt this legacy and achieve our community goals, public and private development and infrastructure projects must be designed to reduce exposure, minimize conflicts, control unsafe behaviors, and ensure visibility.

GUIDELINES –

B1. Minimize the Impact of Vehicular Access on the Streetscape

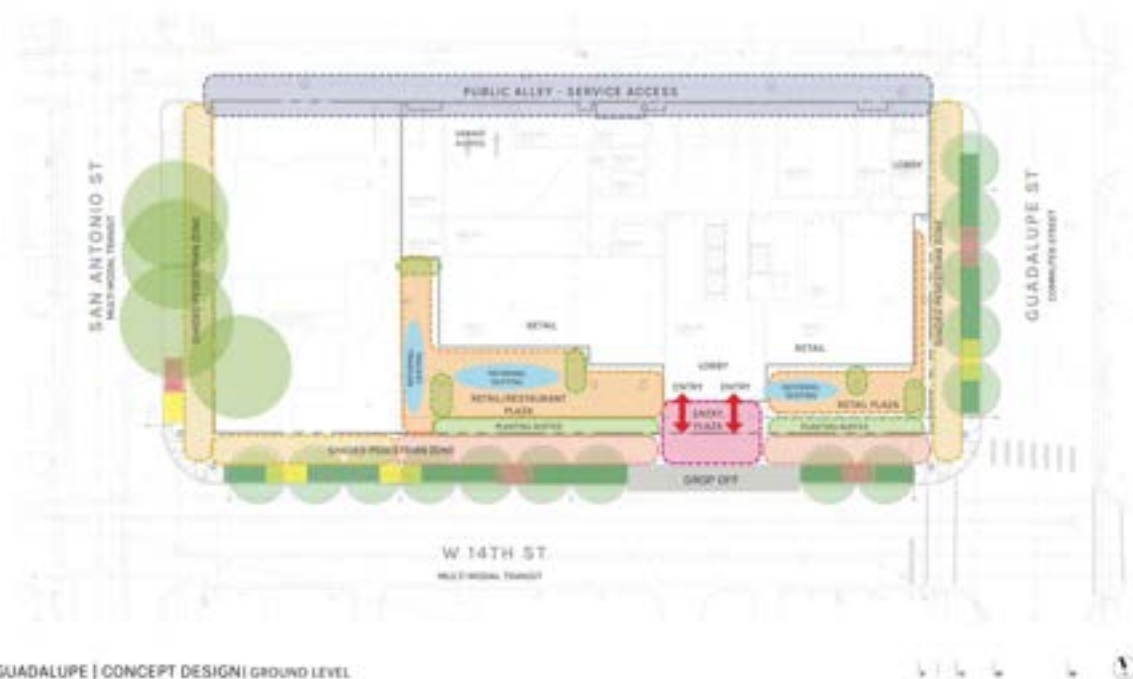
- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Protect street users by minimizing conflict points between motor vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists, including driveways, parking, loading, and service areas.**Conditions:**
 - Where an alley abuts the site, vehicular access ***should*** be taken exclusively from the alley.
 - Where driveways cross the streetscape, they ***must***:
 - Be consolidated to reduce the number of curb cuts,
 - Limit the width of curb cuts to 2 lanes maximum,
 - Where access to a high-capacity garage is required, driveways are limited to 3 lanes maximum and must be designed according to guideline B2 below.

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- Be narrow, impacting the minimum length of frontage possible and limiting crossing distances to no more than 10 feet per lane.
- Where alley access is present, all driveways that cross the streetscape **must** be designed according to guideline B2 below.
- Generally, access **should** be taken as far from intersections and as close to shared lot lines as practical.
- Use curbs and medians to prevent unsafe turning movements especially where left turns are made into or from driveways.
- Unused curb cuts **should** be closed

e. Examples:

- no on-site parking or driveway.
- Access to drop-off areas, parking, loading, and other service areas from the same drive lane.
- Valet access and drop-offs accessed from an alley.
- Alley-loaded vehicle access with no curb cuts on primary streets.



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B2. Provide Driveway and Intersection Design That Clearly Indicates and Enforces Sidewalk and Bikeway Users Have the Right Of Way

- a. Applicability: Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. Priority: Tier 2 ▾
- c. Values: Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. Intent: Protect street users by designing intersections and driveways, including parking lots, service areas, loading docks, and garages, to physically communicate to road users places where pedestrians and bicyclists have the right of way and naturally force motor vehicles to move at safe speeds, yield, and otherwise abide by these laws.
- e. Conditions:
- **Provide** a distinct material treatment to differentiate between sidewalks, bikeways, driveways, and curb cuts. Each of these infrastructural elements must clearly contrast to ensure that vehicles making turning movements understand they are leaving a motor vehicle use area and should expect to yield to other road users. Treatments should include the use of different materials, colors, and relief joints.
 - Motor vehicle movements both into and leaving a site **must** be controlled with traffic calming devices to ensure vehicles approach pedestrian and bicycle crossings at safe speeds.
 - Designs **must not** rely on signage to enforce safe interactions around sidewalks and bikeways. While this may include stop signs, signage alone is not sufficient to comply with this guideline.
 - At driveways, sidewalks and bikeways **must** be flat except for the minimum slope required for drainage and maintain their clear widths. Driveways should ramp up to the sidewalk and bikeway elevation.
 - Loading zones and drop-off areas **must** not conflict with or encroach onto bikeways or sidewalks **and require** appropriate buffer space to accommodate passenger and cargo loading without obstructing sidewalks or bikeways
 - Existing standard type 1 and type 2 driveway designs that continue the material treatment of the driveway over the sidewalk **do not comply** with this guideline.
 - **Provide** speed control devices at driveways located to force safe vehicular speeds near pedestrian and bicycle crossings. This is especially critical where parking ramps descend toward the exit, encouraging acceleration.

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f. Examples-

- Continuous sidewalks with raised pedestrian crosswalks.
- Permanent 5 MPH speed bumps located at parking garage exits and setbacks 20 feet from pedestrian or bike crossings.
- Access control devices like barrier arms, located at a parking garage exit and within 20 feet of a pedestrian or bike crossing, require vehicles to come to a complete stop before engaging with other road users.
- Steep driveway aprons acting as a speedbump forcing vehicles to slow down to safer speeds as they climb from street level to the sidewalk elevation.
- A combination of paver sidewalks, concrete vehicular curb ramps, terracotta colored concrete bike lanes to support intuitive navigation and a clear visual indication of which modes have the right of way in different parts of the streetscape.
- Green bike crossing markings and white pedestrian zebra crossing markings at driveway crossings that are highly visible to drivers.

B3. Minimize Crossing Distances and Exposure

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Protect street users by minimizing the area where pedestrians and cyclists are exposed to motor vehicles without physical separation and protective obstructions and encourage motor vehicles to move through intersections at safer speeds.
- e. **Conditions:**
- Constrain the dimension between physically protected pedestrian and bicycle spaces at intersections and midblock crossings to the minimum possible dimension
 - Minimize pedestrian crossing distances
 - Use curbs or bollards to protect pedestrians at crossing entrances
 - Reduce curb radii to the minimum possible
 - Pedestrian and bike crossings should align to sidewalks and be as direct, flat, and convenient as possible.
 - Intersection designs should be universally designed and limit the turning movements required to cross a street
 - Intersection designs do not direct pedestrians or bicycles through areas subject to puddles or hyper-localized flooding
 - On public infrastructure projects, traffic lights ***should*** be timed and designed to prioritize pedestrian safety and convenience. Traffic lights ***should*** have automatic pedestrian signal phasing and automatic bicycle signal phasing.
- f. **Examples-**
- Bulb-outs or curb extensions at intersections and crossings that shorten crossing distances, prevent parked cars from blocking visibility to pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and formalize turning radii, aligning the curb radius with the effective turning radius
 - Tabled pedestrian crossings at intersections and crossing points that meet adjacent pedestrian grades.
 - Pedestrian refuge islands at intersections and crossings, including on internal circulation routes crossing pedestrian routes.
 - Bollards or other barriers at curb-less drop-off and pick-up locations or at intersection corners between pedestrian areas and the curb.
 - 10' curb radii to force motor vehicles to take turning movements at safe speeds and reduce crossing distances.

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B4. Provide Self-Enforcing Physical Barriers Between Motor Vehicles and Sidewalk and Bikeways

- a. Applicability: Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. Priority: Tier 1 ▾
- c. Values: Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. Intent: Protect street users by providing physical separation from motor vehicles that leave the road at high speed and prevent vehicles from encroaching into pedestrian or bicycle-designated spaces.
- e. Conditions:
- Except at required curb cuts **provide** self-enforcing, permanent, physical barriers between motor vehicles and sidewalks. If street trees are incorporated, one shade tree **should** be planted for every 30' of street frontage and species should be selected for shade at mature growth with appropriate clear widths and heights around the sidewalk. Where conflicting with overhead utilities, one utility-compatible tree **should** be planted for every 15' of street frontage.
 - **Provide** self-enforcing, permanent, physical barriers between motor vehicles and bikeways
 - Where streets are 3 lanes or less, a permanent curb and a buffer of not less than 2' depth **should** be provided to separate bikeways from parking or travel lanes.
 - Where streets are 3 lanes wide or greater a permanent curb, 6' buffer and regular physical barriers must separate motor vehicles from pedestrians and bicycles
 - for curbsless streets and any portions of streets with curbs less than 6" tall, motor vehicles must be separated from pedestrians and bicycle areas with permanent bollards spaced 4' – 6' apart.
 - Where streets have both low traffic volumes and average vehicle speeds of less than 25 MPH, bicycles may comfortably share travel lanes with motor vehicles and no separated bicycle infrastructure is required unless the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan specifies that the future configuration of the street includes separated bicycle infrastructure.
- f. Examples-
- Continuous canopy of street trees at appropriate spacing.
- Regularly spaced permanent bollards (not flexposts) between motor vehicles and bikeways and sidewalks.
 - Curb protected bike lanes or sidewalk-level bike lanes with buffer space from curb.

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- Planters, bollards, planted trees, or a combination of the three between the curb and the sidewalk.

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B5. Slow Motor Vehicles to Safe Speeds Using Environmental Design

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Protect street users by providing street and streetscape improvements that slow motor vehicles to safe speeds where they are near or interact with people outside of motor vehicles.
- e. **Conditions:**
- Lane widths and perceived lane widths should be reduced to the narrowest allowed by the transportation criteria manual for the entire frontage of the project site
 - Curb radii and effective turning radii at intersections and driveways should be reduced to the minimum allowed by the transportation criteria manual
 - No slip lanes may be permitted
 - Street and streetscape designs should use visual and physical indicators to create friction and indicate that cars are in a complex urban environment.
- f. **Examples:**
- Street trees.
 - Zero setbacks.
 - Shared streets.
 -
 - Two way streets.
 -
 - Speed humps, cushions, and tables.
 - Chicanes and lane shifts.
 -
 - 10' curb radii, bulbouts or check-downs at intersections or mid-block crossings.

B6. Ensure Visibility of Bicyclists and Pedestrians Especially at Intersections, Curb Cuts, and Areas of Modal Conflict

- a. Applicability: Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. Priority: Tier 2 ▾
- c. Values: Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. Intent: Protect street users by providing adequate lighting and clear sightlines help drivers recognize crossings and yield to those with the right-of-way.
- e. Conditions:
- **Daylight** intersections and midblock crossings with permanent self-enforcing physical barriers that prevent motor vehicles from obstructing the visibility of pedestrians and cyclists at crossings.
 - **Provide** lighting with high uniformity at intersections, curb cuts, and other areas of modal conflict.
 - Pedestrian and bicycle crossing **must** be illuminated to the following standards:
 - a. Fixtures should be placed about 10 feet before the crossing,
 - b. Provide a minimum of 20 lux of vertical illuminance at 3 feet above the finished surface for the full length of the crossing, and
 - c. have a uniformity ratio between 1:1 and 3:1
 - Lighting of crossings **must** not produce glare for drivers, pedestrians, or cyclists
 - Lighting of crosswalks **must** provide positive contrast of pedestrians and cyclists from the background
 - The surface of bikeways and sidewalks surrounding the crossing **must** be illuminated to a minimum of 1 foot candles with a maximum of 3:1 uniformity ratio.
 - **Ensure** clear visibility at driveway crossings so vehicles can exit without obstructing pedestrians and cyclists who have the right of way. This is especially critical for vehicles exiting parking structures
- f. Examples:
- Parking structures setback from sidewalk and bike lane crossings to allow exiting vehicles proper visibility to approaching pedestrians and cyclist
 - Detection systems that alert exiting drivers of the presence of approaching pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Bulb-out or curb extensions located at crossings and intersections.

CORE PRINCIPLE C-

Activate & Engage the Public Realm

To make Austin more walkable, there must be functional reasons to be on the sidewalk, and sidewalks must be visually interesting and social- with high visual and physical connectivity from the sidewalk to active ground floor uses. In addition to the sidewalk being a functional, comfortable, exciting, social, and safe environment, the experience of the non-motorist user both inside and out of a building should be prioritized. The pedestrian, and cyclist experience should receive at least as much consideration and investment as the experience of those accessing the site by motor vehicle. By creating spaces that encourage interaction, foster community, and promote well-being, people will feel comfortable, inspired, and motivated to engage with their surroundings. Public spaces that are activated and engaged have the potential to become focal points for community life, bringing people together in meaningful ways.

GUIDELINES –

C1. Provide a Mix of Building Uses that Foster Vibrancy and Activity

Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects**

Priority: **Tier 1**

Values: **Equity & Affordability** **Mobility & Connectivity** **Design Excellence**
Health, Safety, Welfare

Intent: Provide for streetlife activity by integrating a mix of living, shopping, relaxing, working, and destination uses that function at various times or on different days to keep sidewalks lively and minimize periods of inactivity.

Conditions:

- i. ***Provide*** a mix of active building uses that support pedestrian activity throughout the day and week. Low occupancy uses such as warehouses, storage, and parking will not be counted in the evaluation of mixed use functions.
- ii. Projects ***should*** include secondary uses with operating hours that contrast with the operating hours of the primary building use. Where a single use building is proposed, the operating hours of the proposed use must contrast from the operating hours of the surrounding established predominant uses.

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- iii. The mix of uses ***must*** provide for layered activity throughout mornings, the work day, evenings, and weekends. If a project is single-use it complies with this condition if it complements adjacent building uses.
- iv. When determining building uses, survey adjacent building uses and complement them.
- v. ***Provide*** wayfinding to internal and upper level publicly accessible uses (roof decks, restaurants, etc..)
- vi. Projects ***should*** generally locate the most public uses on the ground floor to activate the street.

Examples:

- i. Restaurant and retail space at the ground floor.
- ii. Vertically layered buildings that present more public uses on the ground floor and private uses at upper levels.
- iii. Accessible vertical circulation with wayfinding signage for rooftop bars and restaurants.
- iv. Activated street-level building corners with uses open to the public.



The Austonian Tower, Austin TX

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C2. Provide Frequent, Sheltered, and Architecturally Enhanced Street-Facing Entrances

Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects**

Priority: **Tier 1**

Values: **Mobility & Connectivity** **Design Excellence** **Health, Safety, Welfare**

Intent: Provide for streetlife activity by ensuring entrances and lobbies area covered and directly accessible from the street or public right-of-way and designs to actively engage street users.

Conditions:

- i. Entrances ***must*** provide building users with shelter from precipitation and sun. Sheltering structures should have a depth no less than 40% of their clear height and a width no less than 60% their clear height.
- ii. Entrances ***must*** be located on all building frontages facing a publicly accessible space, street, or right-of-way. Entrances shall be provided as follows:
 1. Pedestrian Priority Streets: 50' maximum spacing
 2. Mixed Mode, Bicycle and Local, & Rapid Transit Streets: 75' maximum spacing
 3. Commuter Streets: 100' maximum spacing
 4. All other streets: 150' maximum spacing
- iii. Doors separated by less than 25' accessing the same space do not count as separate entrances for the purpose of complying with this guideline.
- iv. Projects replacing existing publicly accessible uses ***must not*** provide fewer street-facing entrances than existed previously.
- v. To facilitate pedestrian access, building entrances ***should*** be architecturally distinct and clearly recognizable without the use of business signage.
- vi. Entrances to residential units ***should*** be elevated above street level by no less than 18" or separated from the sidewalk or publicly accessible open space with a private forecourt.
- vii. Entrances to commercial space or shared access lobbies and amenities ***should*** be at an elevation within 2' of the abutting sidewalk elevation.
- viii. Doors exclusively designed for fire stair egress, utilities, or back of house do not count as street-facing entrances for the purpose of complying with this guideline.

Examples:

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- i. Differentiated entrances between uses so that retail spaces have a unique identity and space for pedestrian-oriented tenant signage.
- ii. Recessed entryways, awnings, architectural projections, and changes of material that make entrances distinct from the rest of the building.
- iii. Awnings or detached shade structures that provide shelter from the elements.
- iv. Private amenities located only on upper floors to allow for more ground floor tenants and public entrances.
- v. Publicly accessible uses within lobbies or minimized private lobbies..



Architecture tells you where the entrance is- South Congress Hotel (Photo Credit: Chas Daniel)

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C3. Provide High Levels of Transparency on Street-Facing Ground Floor Facades

Applicability: Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾

Priority: Tier 1 ▾

Values: Design Excellence ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Climate & Environment ▾

Intent: Provide streetlife activity by maximizing building glazing for visual interest for street users, connecting a building’s interior with its exterior, and providing a human scale to building façades. **Conditions:**

- i. Reflective, tinted, or low-transparency glass should not be used to provide transparency along the sidewalk. Ground floor door and window glazing must have a visible light transmittance of 60% or higher and an external reflectance of 20% or less to be considered *transparent*.
- ii. The minimum appropriate level of transparency on street-facing ground floor building facades varies by the planned street character and function. The following ground floor transparency minimums are prescribed according to street types designated by the Great Streets Master Plan. Ground floor facades that face:
 1. Commercial Buildings on “Pedestrian Dominant Streets” and “Pedestrian Promenades” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 70% of the ground floor facade.
 2. Commercial Buildings on “Rapid Transit Streets” and “Bicycle & Local Access Streets” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 60% of the ground floor facade.
 3. Commercial Buildings on “Mixed Mode Streets” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 50% of the ground floor facade.
 4. Commercial Buildings on “Commuter Streets” and “Commuter Boulevards” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 40% of the ground floor facade.
- iii. Residential Buildings should have transparent materials on a minimum of 35% of the ground floor facade on all street types.
- iv. Transparent materials should be located in a manner so that pedestrians can easily see in and building users can easily see out.
- v. Transparent materials should be sized to help create a human scale at the street level.

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- vi. Minimize non-transparent compliant walls facing the street on the ground floor. Where these blank walls are unavoidable, provide treatments that introduce a human-scale, visual interest, and dynamics to the streetscape or publicly accessible open space.

Examples:

- i. Loading docks, service areas, and parking garages located along an alley and providing active space between these uses and the side street.
- ii. Non-transparent walls that are visually interesting with artwork, green walls, or unique material articulation.
- iii. Human-scaled storefront windows at street-facing façades.



Transparency on the ground floor with human scale - Image Credit: The Waverly: Seattle, Washington

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C4. Provide an Urban Street Wall with Active Pedestrian Uses along the sidewalk

Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects** with vertical development

Priority: **Tier 1**

Values: **Mobility & Connectivity** **Design Excellence** **Health, Safety, Welfare**

Intent: Provide for streetlife activity by framing the right-of-way with a consistent street wall that creates a sense of enclosure and spatially defines the public realm as an “outdoor room” with programming an active, publicly accessible uses and amenities.

Conditions:

- i. Buildings ***should*** be located near or abutting the sidewalk
- ii. Where the pedestrian clear zone of the sidewalk is less than 10 feet wide, buildings and other vertical encroachments ***should*** be set back from the sidewalk at least the difference between the proposed pedestrian clear width and 10 feet. Permanent improvements should be located in a way that retains the possibility for a sidewalk to be widened to at least 10 feet in the future.
- iii. Buildings ***must*** be located within 10 feet of the street lot line on both the primary street and side street frontages
- iv. Buildings ***must*** occupy the first 10 feet of the lot for a minimum of 80% the lot frontage on the primary street.
- v. Buildings ***must*** occupy the first 10 feet of the lot for a minimum of 60% the lot frontage on the side street.
- vi. If the site is on a commercial corridor, the side street lot frontage ***requirement may be reduced*** to 30%
- vii. Portions of buildings with a residential ground floor use ***may increase*** the maximum setback from the sidewalk from 10 feet to 20 feet.
- viii. A pedestrian plaza meeting the Publicly Accessible Plaza Design Standards ***may be*** provided as a substitute for a building located within 10 feet of the sidewalk for no more than 30% of the lot frontage requirement.
- ix. ***Provide*** 12’ -0” min. ceiling height at the ground floor for commercial use.
- x. ***Provide*** at least one permanent active ground floor tenant space per 75 feet of required lot frontage. Each qualifying tenant space must be directly accessible and clearly visible from the sidewalk, plazas, courtyards, or other publicly accessible open spaces and have an independent primary entrance. Projects that include multiple lobbies that serve the same use ***must*** count these lobbies as a single tenant space.
- xi. Ground floor active use tenant spaces ***must*** comprise at least 75% of the street facing linear building frontage.

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- xii. Each active use tenant space must be at least 24 feet deep as measured perpendicularly from the street facing wall.
- xiii. Ground floor active use tenant spaces **should** be built for uses that are appropriate to the planned street character and function. For example, for the street types designated by the Great Streets Master Plan, the following uses
 - 1. “Pedestrian Dominant Streets” and “Pedestrian Promenades” active uses should primarily have transparent materials on a minimum of 70% of the ground floor facade.
 - 2. Commercial Buildings on “Rapid Transit Streets” and “Bicycle & Local Access Streets” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 60% of the ground floor facade.
 - 3. Commercial Buildings on “Mixed Mode Streets” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 50% of the ground floor facade.
 - 4. Commercial Buildings on “Commuter Streets” and “Commuter Boulevards” should have transparent materials on a minimum of 40% of the ground floor facade.
- xiv.
- xv. Along Pedestrian Priority Active pedestrian uses **should**
- xvi. Project **should** curate the ground-floor experience to create an attractive environment where people want to visit and where businesses want to be.
- xvii. For all non-residential active uses on the ground floor within 15’ of the pedestrian clear zone, the finished floor elevation of the ground floor **must** be within 2 feet of sidewalk elevation.
- xviii. For all residential uses on the ground floor within 15’ of the pedestrian clear zone, the finished floor elevation of the ground floor **must** be between 1.5’ and 5’ above the sidewalk elevation. Where a private forecourt is provided to enhance a private residential street-facing entrance, the finished floor elevation must be within 2 feet of the sidewalk elevation
- xix. Private building amenities do not qualify as active pedestrian uses.

Examples:

- i. Buildings located with a 0’ street setback.
- ii. Buildings set back from the sidewalk with cafe seating or other indoor/outdoor uses located between the building and the street.
- iii. Where buildings have residential uses on the ground floor, elevated finished floor elevation at 24-48 inches above the sidewalk elevation to enhance privacy. Alternatively, a modest private forecourt no more than 15’ deep surrounded with a short fence and gate.

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- iv. A portion of a building setback from the sidewalk with only a publicly-accessible plaza located between the building and the sidewalk
- v. Active uses wrapping the perimeter of a parking garage .
- vi. Activated street-level building corners with uses open to the public.
- vii. Retail and food services.



Murphy Avenue near Sunnyvale Caltrain Station, Sunnyvale CA (Source: Flickr - Sergio Ruiz)

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C5. Provide Indoor-Outdoor Uses

Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects** including plazas, parks, courtyards and other public accessible open spaces.

Priority: **Tier 2**

Values: **Design Excellence** **Mobility & Connectivity** **Health, Safety, Welfare**

Intent: Provide for streetlife activity by incorporating blended indoor and outdoor use spaces for optimal comfort regardless of weather, time or day, or activity type.

Conditions:

- i. Pedestrian-oriented uses ***must*** be provided at all street-facing facades.
- ii. Temporary, Seasonal and Event Activation ***should*** be accommodated into the streetscape design.
- iii. Street yard fences, barriers, and walls ***must*** not block building entrances or storefronts and must not be taller than 36 inches as measured from the adjacent ground surface.
- iv. Utilize transitions by providing a gradient of private space to semi-public space to pass-through spaces, enabling seamless shifts between different functions and activities from indoor to outdoor space.
- v. Uses ***should*** be directly accessible from the sidewalk.

Examples:

- i. Cafe tables and kiosks occupying a portion of the public right-of-way.
- ii. Retail displays like placards or clothing rack displays.
- iii. Seasonal decorations or event displays.
- iv. Landscape, greenery, and visual buffers to provide a sense of privacy without creating physical barriers.
- v. Balconies, terraces, or community gardens acting as transitional spaces that bridge the public and private realms.

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True Food Kitchen (Photo Credit: Jay Westcott)

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C6. Hide Parking, Loading, Mechanical Equipment, and Utilities

Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects**

Priority: **Tier 1**

Values: **Design Excellence**

Intent: Provide for streetlife activity by locating spaces for building support services and infrastructure to avoid interfering with pedestrian circulation and concealing utilities from view in public pedestrian areas.

Conditions:

- i. Motor vehicle use areas ***are not permitted*** between the building and the public sidewalk. This includes porte cocheres, drop-off areas, and drive-thrus.
- ii. Parking structures ***should*** not be visible from the public right of way.
- iii. Loading bays and docks ***must*** be located off an alley or back side of the building, when an alley is present. If an alley is not present, then these uses ***should*** be located on the street with the least amount of pedestrian activity. They ***must not*** be located off Pedestrian Dominant streets or Pedestrian Priority streets.
- iv. Building utilities, including trash rooms, dumpsters, and transformers, ***must*** be located off of an alley, located underground, or in another place where pedestrians will not encounter them.
- v. Mechanical equipment ***must*** be located where it is hidden from view and away from the public street edge.

Examples:

- i. Underground transformer rooms or vaults located off the alley.
- ii. Art programs that provide small art installations at existing mechanical boxes and transformers.
- iii. Placemaking that integrates building electrical/mechanical infrastructure into designs.
- iv. Creative screening, buffers, and art to shield pedestrians from unsightly and potentially dangerous equipment.
- v. No on site parking.
- vi. Parking underground, utilizing alleys for parking garage entries and exits.
- vii. Dedicated zone within the building footprint for trash staging.

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C7. Direct Pedestrians and Building User Movements to Street Level

Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects** **Public Infrastructure**

Priority: **Tier 2**

Values: **Design Excellence** **Mobility & Connectivity** **Health, Safety, Welfare**

Intent: Provide for streetlife activity by promoting foot traffic at street level and avoiding strategies that remove the general public from the street.

Conditions:

- i. Do not provide sky bridges between buildings over a public street, except where street level connectivity does not currently exist.
- ii. Do not provide underground walkways between buildings under a public street.
- iii. Do not provide upper level commercial activity unless the ground floor is also activated with commercial uses along 75% of its building frontage.

Examples:

- i. For projects spanning a public or private road, replace sky bridges or tunnels with street-level crossings.
- ii. Improve existing crosswalks and intersections.

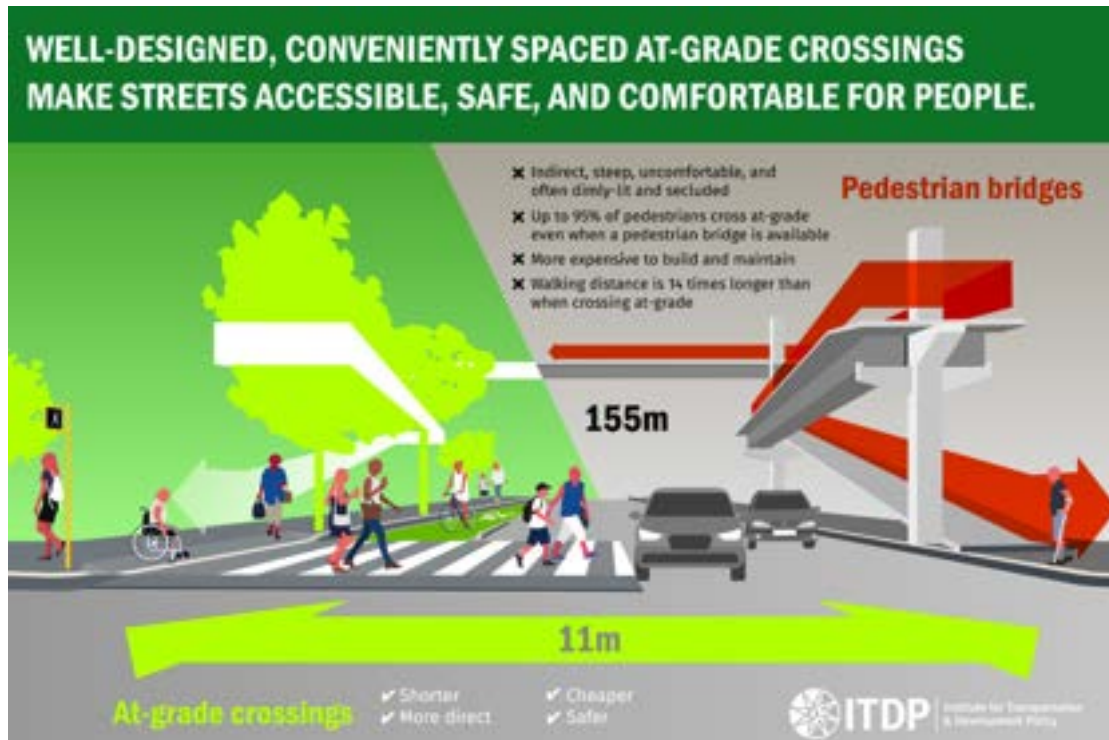


Image Credit: Institute for Transportation & Development Policy

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CORE PRINCIPLE D-

Support Public Safety Through Environmental Design

By promoting a vibrant street life and fostering a sense of community ownership over public spaces, projects can enhance both safety and comfort in the public realm. In addition to Core Principle-C: Activate and Engage the Sidewalk, projects must promote activity and natural observation of the public realm throughout the day.

GUIDELINES

D1. Provide Upper Floor Transparency

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾ Climate & Environment ▾
- d. **Intent:** Provide pedestrian safety and comfort by using facade transparency to foster visual connections between the public realm and the building's interior.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Glazing **must** have a visible light transmittance of 60% or higher and an external reflectance of 20% or less to be considered *transparent*.
 - ii. Commercial Buildings **must** provide transparent materials on a minimum of 50% of the facade area facing a public space or right-of-way. This applies to the first five levels of the building only.
 - iii. Residential Buildings **must** provide transparent materials on a minimum of 35% of the facade area facing a public space or right-of-way. This applies to the first five levels of the building only.
 - iv. Views from the upper story windows to the publicly accessible spaces below **must** be maintained without architectural obstructions.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Windows facing the street.
 - ii. Clear sight lines from interior to exterior.

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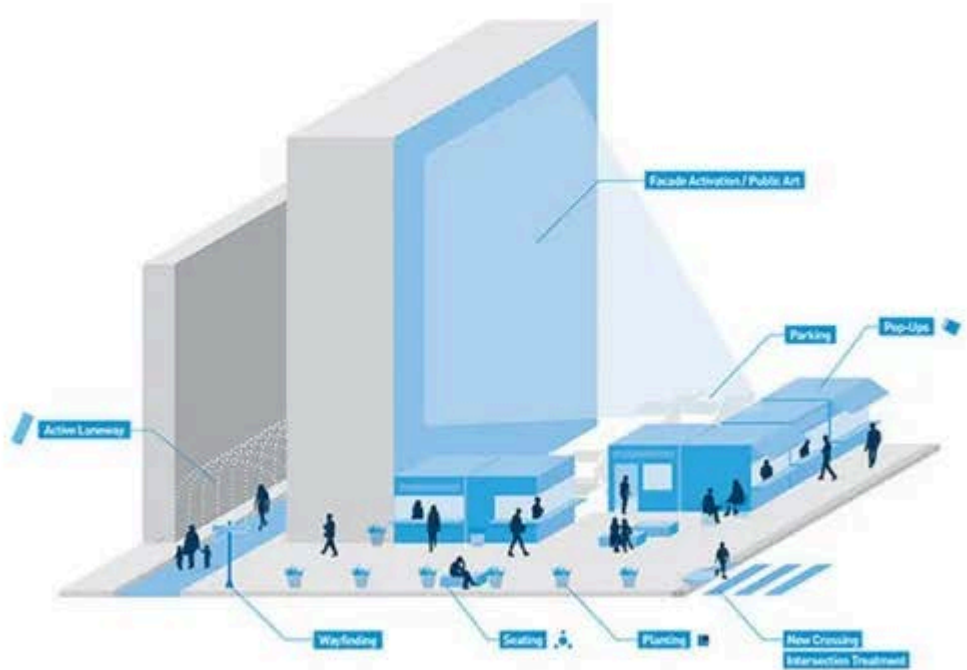


Image Credit: Gehl Architects

D2. Provide Active Uses on Upper Floors Overlooking the Street

- a. **Applicability:** **Private Projects** **Public Projects** Including stand alone parking garages
- b. **Priority:** **Tier 2**
- c. **Values:** **Design Excellence** **Health, Safety, Welfare**
- d. **Intent:** Provide pedestrian safety and comfort by placing active uses on the upper floors to allow for natural visual surveillance of adjacent outdoor publicly accessible spaces.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Projects **must** provide at least one upper floor active use per street face that promotes occupancy throughout the day and at night.
 - ii. Projects **must** design for viewing street level publicly accessible spaces from the upper floors by minimizing visual obstructions.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Locate non-regularly occupied space, like corridors, away from street facing facade.

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- ii. Locate regularly occupied spaces, like offices and living space along street facing facades.



Image Credit: The Human Scale

D3. Provide Upper Floor Indoor/Outdoor Spaces, Balconies, & Terraces

- a. Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects**
- b. Priority: **Tier 2**
- c. Values: **Design Excellence** **Health, Safety, Welfare** **Cultural Preservation**
Climate & Environment
- d. **Intent:** Provide pedestrian safety and comfort by using upper floor outdoor spaces for auditory and visual surveillance of adjacent outdoor publicly accessible spaces.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Provide** occupiable outdoor spaces on the first five floors.
 - ii. Balconies **should** be designed to maximize usability, comfort, and building performance.

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- iii. ***Do not provide*** articulations in the building facade that will obstruct views from the building to the public spaces below.
- iv. Outdoor space ***must*** be sized to accommodate a minimum of 10% of the occupant load of the adjacent indoor space.
- v. Outdoor space ***must*** be accessible.
- vi. Outdoor space ***should*** be adjacent to indoor active use.
- vii. Outdoor space ***should*** face a public street or publicly accessible open space.

f. Examples:

- i. The following architectural features that face publicly accessible outdoor space:
 - balconies,
 - terraces, or
 - roof decks

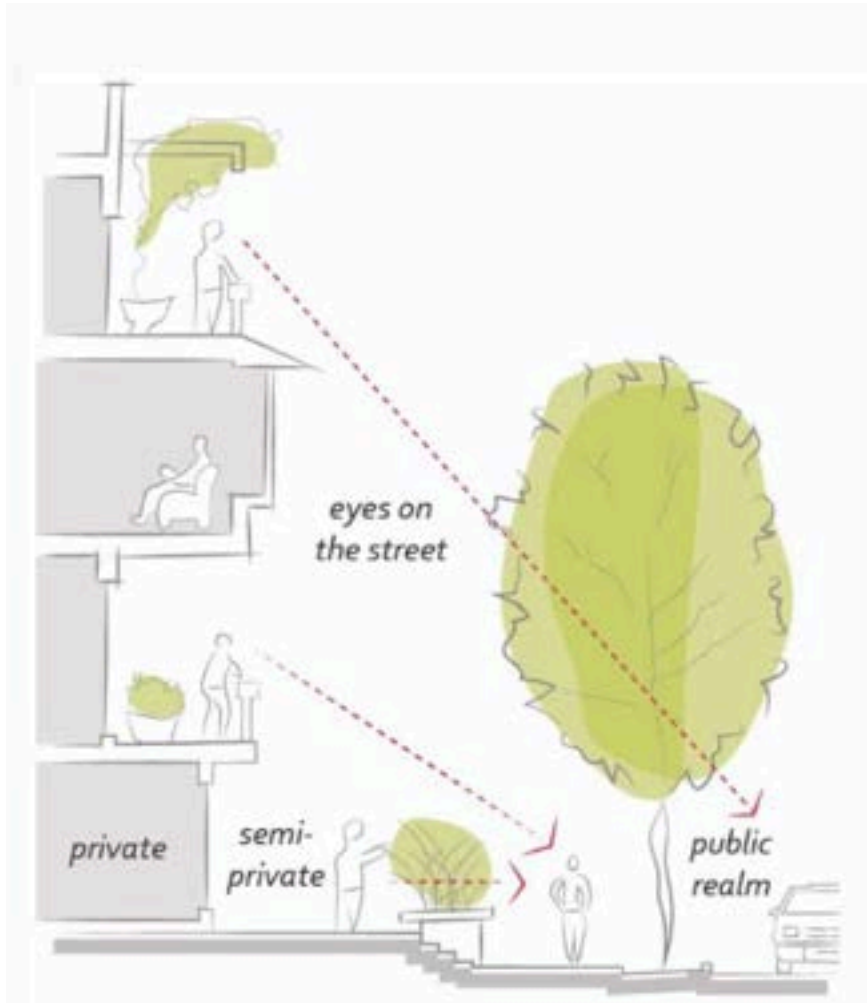


Image Credit: Sandy James Planner

D4. Provide Pedestrian Scaled Lighting

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- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Provide pedestrian safety and comfort by enhancing the illumination of pedestrian outdoor areas.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. **Provide** a multi-layered lighting system which includes 2 or more of the following permanent lighting systems:
 - Pedestrian scaled streetlight
 - Building facade up/down lighting
 - 24 hour storefront interior lighting which illuminates the public realm, contributing a minimum of 1 foot candle.
 - Tree uplighting / foliage lighting (Note: Tree lighting around tree trunks is not recommended to encourage tree health. Other forms of tree lighting, that doesn't limit tree growth, are acceptable.)
 - Lighting on permanent furniture installation (i.e. under benches)
 - Light art installations or projection art installations,
 - other light system types.
 - ii. Light fixtures **should** be designed and installed in a manner so that they do not produce glare.
 - iii. Urban Streets **should** be lit by fixtures emitting no more than 4000K.
 - iv. A minimum of 1 foot candle of warm light **should** be provided on all sidewalks with a maximum uniformity ratio of 4.0.
 - v. Fixture heights should not exceed 16' above finished grade.
- f. **Examples:**
Adequate lighting using downlighting at poles, and lighting attached to the building facade, Domain Northside.



[Image Source](#)

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[Image Source](#)

Spill out lighting from building interior, street light casting onto sidewalk.



[Image Source](#)

Tree lighting, festoon lighting, catenary lighting

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[Image Source](#)

Bad lighting - heavy glare



[Image Source](#)

g. Resources:

- i. [The Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) published this primer to be a resource for transportation practitioners interested in the safety and security benefits of pedestrian lighting as well as lighting design considerations at locations with existing or future pedestrian activity.](#)
- ii. <https://minneapolis2040.com/policies/public-safety-through-environmental-design/>

D5. Maintain Visual Acuity Within the Public Realm

a. Applicability: Private Projects Public Projects Public Infrastructure

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- b. Priority: Tier 1 ▾
- c. Values: Design Excellence ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. Intent: Provide pedestrian safety and comfort by placing all public realm design elements in a manner that creates and maintains clear sight lines.
- e. Conditions:
- Clear sight lines from building windows and inhabited areas ***should*** be provided throughout all parts of the site, this includes the second story of the building.
 - If ground floor building articulation occurs it ***must*** be done at a depth shallow enough so that someone cannot hide within the articulated area. Alternatively if articulated areas have visual access from the inside then the depth requirement does not apply.
 - The area between 3' and 7' above grade ***should*** be kept clear of large or ***continuous*** visual obstructions to allow for an adequate view corridor.
 - Outdoor open spaces, including courtyards and plazas, ***must*** maintain clear sight lines throughout the space.
- f. Examples:



Street-level articulation that can create hiding places

- Avoid fencing, walls or hedges more than 36" in height in publicly accessible outdoor spaces
- Indeed Tower Image - Example of open plaza

D6. Clearly Demarcate Private Space from Public Space

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- a. **Applicability:** Public Projects ▾ Private Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Health, Safety, Welfare ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Provide pedestrian safety and comfort by incorporating design elements that easily guide building visitors to publicly accessible spaces while also creating barriers to entry to private amenity spaces.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Buildings that include windows into private ground floor uses located near an area that is publicly accessible ***must*** include buffering landscape no less than 3 feet deep or be elevated 20" or greater above grade.
 - ii. Buildings with private ground floor uses with doors located near a publicly accessible area ***must*** provide a clearly demarcated semi private space surrounding the door no less than 5 feet deep.
 - iii. Outdoor spaces that are not public ***must*** be demarcated from nearby publicly accessible outdoor spaces.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. landscape, planters, pavement design, gateway treatments, signage, fencing and gates
 - ii. Grove Wine Bar
 - iii. Sammie's Italian
 - iv. Don Artemio (Ft. Worth)

CORE PRINCIPLE E-

Enhance the Public Realm and Elevate the Walking, Biking, and Transit User Experience.

Designing the public realm as outdoor rooms can significantly enhance urban environments by offering several key benefits. Enclosed spaces create a feeling of safety and intimacy, encouraging people to linger and interact. Thoughtful design can provide shelter from wind, sun, and rain, making outdoor areas more comfortable year-round. Designing spaces that feel proportionate to human dimensions fosters a more inviting atmosphere. Smaller, more intimate spaces promote social interactions, making it easier for people to connect. Outdoor rooms can serve multiple functions—socializing, relaxation, events—making them valuable assets for communities. Thoughtfully designed outdoor rooms can create more favorable microclimates, improving comfort levels for users. These spaces serve as communal hubs, fostering connections and a sense of belonging among residents. By focusing on enclosure, human scale, and a sense of place, designers can create public realms that are not only functional but also enriching, ultimately contributing to healthier, happier communities.

GUIDELINES –

E1. Provide Mid-Block Pedestrian Passages

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
This guideline applies to all projects that are impacted by a pedestrian connection requirement from a regulating plan and any project that meets the following criteria:
- i. Lot area of 30,000 square feet or greater,
 - ii. Lot width of 300 feet or greater, and
 - iii. Lot is a through lot or abuts either a public right-of-way, publicly accessible easement, park, greenway, trail, bikeway, or publicly accessible plaza on at least two opposing lot lines.
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by breaking down large blocks into smaller, more walkable segments.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. Mid-block passage ***must*** be contiguous with public realm,

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- ii. **Must** be a minimum of 50% open to the sky,
 - iii. Covered portions **must** have a minimum clear height of 15' and a minimum clear width of 25 feet,
 - iv. Uncovered portions **must** have a minimum clear width of 15 feet.
 - v. The pedestrian passageway **should** provide a relatively direct connection across the block.
 - vi. The passageway **must** be separated from the edge of the block by at least 125 feet.
 - vii. When surrounding streets intersect near the middle of a block, mid-block pedestrian passages **should** be located to extend the intersections for pedestrians.
 - viii. Mid-block pedestrian passages **may** be combined with fire lanes where vehicular traffic is limited to emergency vehicles.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Connections to Shoal Creek Trail
 - ii. Connections to South Walnut Creek Trail
 - iii. Austin Central Library
 - iv. The Independent
 - v. Plaza Saltillo

E2. Provide A Wide Pedestrian Clear Zone

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by providing generous space for pedestrian movements and activity without obstructions along building frontages.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Provide** a minimum 6' wide clear pedestrian area along frontages with predominantly residential ground floor uses with building heights of 4 stories or less; **Provide** a minimum 8' clear pedestrian area along frontages with commercial ground floor uses and buildings greater than 4 stories ; **Provide** a minimum 10' clear pedestrian area for all frontages within Downtown, Activity Centers, on Core Transportation Corridors, and on Future Core Transportation Corridors. Public infrastructure projects and projects where the existing structure along the street is maintained may deviate from these dimensions to the least amount feasible in constrained conditions.

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- ii. Sidewalks along non-residential ground floor uses **must not** include obstructions such as columns, supports for sheltering structures, utility boxes, and poles that reduce the width of the pedestrian clear zone to less than 6' at any point; Sidewalks along residential ground floor uses **must not** include obstructions that reduce the width of the pedestrian clear zone to less than 5'.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Place common obstructions, such as utility boxes, overhead utility poles, light poles, and others outside of clear pedestrian way and in organized clusters that do not impede a direct travel path along right-of-way or obstruct pedestrian crossings and queuing at street crossings.
 - ii. Where existing trees exist, align clear pedestrian ways in a straight line that does not require pedestrians to negotiate around trees.
 - iii. Place columns or structural elements for sheltering structures outside of a clear pedestrian zone.
 - iv. Follow NACTO Urban Street Design Standards
 - v. Follow the City of Austin Core Transportation Plan
 - vi. Follow the City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan



(The Eastbound office complex includes a robust internal circulation route using a mix of materials to break up massing and allow outdoor experiences) (image: Chase Daniel)

Waterloo Greenway?

E3. Provide a Wide Planting Zone

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾

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- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by providing a psychological separation buffer between the curb and the pedestrian zone.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. The planting zone ***must*** be located between the roadbed and pedestrian zone.
 - ii. Where a street has more than 3 total vehicular travel lanes, the planting zone ***should*** be located between the travel lanes and the bikeway where present.
 - iii. The planting zone ***must*** be irrigated
 - iv. ***Provide*** a minimum 6' wide planting zone along frontages with predominantly residential ground floor uses with building heights of 4 stories or less; ***Provide*** a minimum 7' wide planting zone along frontages with commercial ground floor uses and buildings greater than 4 stories; ***Provide*** a minimum 8' wide planting zone for all frontages within Downtown, Activity Centers, and on Core Transportation Corridors. Public infrastructure projects and projects where the existing structure along the street is maintained may deviate from these dimensions to the least amount feasible in constrained conditions.
 - v. Planting areas ***must*** contain substantial soil mass to allow for ideal growth in order to meet this requirement. Soil masses may overlap.
 - Shade Trees require 180 cu ft, at three foot depth
 - Utility Compatible Trees require 65 cu ft, at two foot depth
 - vi. Above grade planters may only be used where they meet the soil volume requirements.
 - vii. Within the planting zone, utilities including laterals ***should*** be coordinated to optimize continuous street tree plantings and designed to protect the utilities while ensuring required soil volumes.
 - viii. Planting zones ***should*** be designed to capture stormwater runoff from abutting roadways, sidewalks, and bikeways to supplement irrigation. Planting zones are not required to be designed for detention or water quality treatment.
 - ix. Except on arterial corridors where no street parking or bikeways are located between the roadbed and the planting zone, planting zones ***must*** be designed to allow frequent pedestrian crossings no less than 4 feet wide and no more than 30 feet between crossings.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Provide continuous planting strips with a mix of shade trees and shrubs or groundcover.

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- ii. Provide planting areas to create buffers between the public right-of-way and outdoor seating areas and courtyards
- iii. Provide structural soil or modular suspended pavement system if a sufficiently-sized planting area cannot otherwise be achieved
- iv. Provide tree grates and/or suspended paving systems to provide suitable soil volume areas where hardscape is needed
- v. Where the planting is encumbered or constrained, use suspended pavement systems to achieve minimum soil volumes.

E4. Provide a Direct Connection Between the Sidewalk and Building Entrances

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Design Excellence ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by ensuring that required entrances are conveniently and effectively accessible to pedestrians.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. All required street-facing entrances and designated publicly accessible plazas ***must*** have a direct pedestrian route to the abutting sidewalk. For a route to be considered direct, it must access the sidewalk and be fully located within 25' of the edge of the street-facing entrance, measured parallel to the sidewalk.
 - ii. Where accessible routes are not the direct pedestrian route, they ***should*** not be substantially less convenient or a lower-quality experience than the direct pedestrian route.
 - iii. Required street-facing entrances ***should*** be located no more than 20 feet from a sidewalk or publicly accessible plaza.
 - iv. There ***should*** not be any obstructions between the building entrance and the sidewalk.
 - v. Where parks, greenways, trails, bikeways or publicly accessible plazas are adjacent to the property line, projects ***should*** provide pedestrian and bicycle access from the existing or planned trail or walkway system to the building entrance using an accessible path.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. South Congress Hotel Plaza:

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Direct connection from the sidewalk to the courtyard was maintained even where covered.

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- ii. Step the slab with the sidewalk elevation



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- iii. Where the grade change allows, tuck-in an addition level below the ground floor accessible from the sidewalk



- iv. Provide building entrances from a trail:



E5. Use High-Quality, Local, & Pedestrian-Friendly Materials at Street Level

a. Applicability: Private Projects Public Projects Public Infrastructure

b. Priority: Tier 2

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- c. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Cultural Preservation ▾ Climate & Environment ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by using materials and systems that provide both physical and mental comfort for pedestrians.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. Projects ***must*** not use metals that get hot to the touch at pedestrian contact points.
 - ii. Projects ***must*** use locally sourced materials that resonate with the local aesthetic and cultural heritage of Austin.
 - iii. Decorative patterns, textures, or motifs such as murals, mosaics, or sculptural elements ***should*** be incorporated into the building facade. These details can add vibrancy and a sense of place to the streetscape, making it visually engaging and memorable for pedestrians.
 - iv. Projects ***must*** respond to the hot and humid climate of Austin and prioritize materials that enhance pedestrian comfort. Select materials that remain cool underfoot and provide shade.
 - v. Facade materials ***must*** be durable, easy to clean, and require very little maintenance.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Materials such as local limestone, Austin granite, reclaimed wood, or other regionally sourced options that embody the unique architectural and design elements found throughout the city can accommodate pedestrians while also providing a sense of place.
 - ii. Materials that complement the architectural styles prevalent in specific neighborhoods ensure a cohesive streetscape design that fosters a sense of place and belonging. If adjacent to a neighborhood with craftsman style bungalows, one example would be to incorporate wood or masonry elements.
 - iii. Use softer wood products instead of steel handrails and concrete benches.
 - iv. Use local limestone pavers in lieu of concrete sidewalks.

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Wood planters and plants create a welcoming and soft streetscape for pedestrians -Image Credit: AMLI on 2nd

E6. Curate the Bicycle User Experience

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Equity & Affordability ▾
Climate & Environment ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by providing long term bicycle parking, showers and lockers.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Provide** sufficient long-term bike parking according to AEGB standards to support safe storage for building tenants that stay for extended periods of time either to live or work.
 - ii. Long-term bike storage facilities, internal to a building, **must** be located no more than 100' from a building entrance.
 - iii. Locker facilities **are required** to meet this guideline. For commercial uses, **provide** 1 locker for each long term bike parking space. For residential uses, provide 1 locker for every 4 long term bike parking spaces. Lockers are not required for short-term bike parking stalls. Lockers **should** be sized so that a helmet, pannier, shoes and clothing can fit within them.

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- iv. For commercial uses, showers ***are required*** to meet this guideline. ***Provide*** 1 shower per 10,000 sf of commercial floor area. Showers ***must*** be located within 100' feet of bike locker facilities.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Individual bicycle lockers or restricted access bicycle rooms can be provided for long-term bike parking.
 - ii. Shower and locker facilities can be located in the building fitness area if the fitness area meets the conditions above for proximity to the bike locker facility.
 - iii. Long-term bike parking may be provided in a garage so long as direct access from the sidewalk or bikeway is provided and the facilities are located near the locker and shower facilities.
 - iv. An accessory bicycle storage structure may be provided outside of a building to shelter long-term bicycle parking spaces and provide convenient access to bikeways and sidewalks.

E7. Provide Street Furniture

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Design Excellence ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by providing street furnishings

Street furnishings provide important amenities for pedestrians by adding functionality and vitality to the pedestrian realm. They announce that pedestrians are welcome and that the street is a comfortable place to be. These amenities provide a functional service to the pedestrian and provide visual detail and interest. Street furniture plays a pivotal role in achieving this objective by providing comfortable seating options, ensuring proper bicycle parking space, and facilitating cleanliness and waste management. When individuals have a place to sit and rest, they are more likely to spend time in public spaces, encouraging social interaction and the formation of community bonds. Moreover, well-placed bollards not only ensure safety and security but also contribute to the ambiance of the surroundings, making people feel more comfortable and at ease.

- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Seating**
 - No less than 1 publicly accessible seat ***must*** be provided for every 75' of street frontage. Bench seating counts as 1 seat for every 24 inches of width.

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- All primary building entrances ***should*** have comfortable, accessible seating within 50’.
 - If a vehicular drop off zone is provided then seating ***should*** be provided that faces the drop off zone and is located within 50’.
 - Seat height ***should*** be taken into consideration and fall within a reasonable realm (18”-24”) but can be flexible based on building use.
- ii. Waste / recycling receptacles***
- publicly accessible waste and recycle receptacles should be provided a minimum of one pair per public entrance to the building.
 - The location of receptacles ***should*** be within 25’ of building entrances, street intersections, drop-off areas, public transit stops, or other collection points with high foot traffic.
- iii. Short-term Bicycle Parking***
- Generally, bike racks must be provided according to the Transportation Criteria Manual.
 - No less than 1 short-term bike rack ***must*** be provided for every 75’ of street frontage.
 - Bike racks ***must*** be directly accessible from the sidewalk or bikeways and ***should*** be sufficiently separated from bike racks and other obstructions to allow for convenient use.
- iv. Bollards***
- When provided, Bollards ***should*** not impede pedestrian/bicycle flow
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Where there is limited space in the ROW:
 - Embed seating wall in the facade
 - Provide wall-mounted waste receptacles
 - ii. Integrated planter benches
 - iii. Use retaining walls as seating walls

E8. Enhance Transit Stops

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Equity & Affordability ▾
Health, Safety, Welfare ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by providing design elements that protect users of adjacent transit stops from the natural elements.

The increased use of public transportation is central to the creation of viable and sustainable dense development. By enhancing our transit stops to allow for safety and human comfort we can increase user satisfaction and potentially recruit new transit users. Increasing the use of alternate modes of transportation is a city wide goal and through Project Connect the City intends to realize this goal. Transit stops should be

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safe, convenient, and comfortable for users. They should allow for seating, protection from the elements, and have basic conveniences such as litter/recycle receptacles.

e. **Conditions:**

- i. ***Provide*** shaded accessible seating within 25' of the transit stop. Leans do not support compliance with this condition.
- ii. Transit shelters ***should*** promote ventilation and avoid solid horizontal windbreaks.
- iii. Street trees ***should*** be planted to provide shade on and around transit shelters.
- iv. ***Provide*** expanded gathering space abutting transit stop with waste receptacles
- v. Transit stop design should be convenient, accessible and integrated into the streetscape
- vi. Buildings must provide primary entrances facing high-frequency transit routes and stations
- vii. Buildings ***should*** provide high-levels of ground floor transparency facing high-frequency transit routes and stations
- viii. Parks and publicly accessible plazas should be directly accessible from sidewalks facing high-frequency transit routes and stations.
- ix. Transit ***stops*** should include bike racks, bike share docks, and dockless micro-mobility parking zones nearby

f. **Examples:**

- i. Transit facilities can be integrated into larger shade structures
- ii. Street trees provide shade and cooling effect to shelter transit users from the sun and heat while waiting for buses and trains.
- iii. *... photos of complete bus stops (with bench and shade structure)*

E9. Provide Art In the Public Realm

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Cultural Preservation ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by promoting local character with public art installations.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. ***Provide*** funding for on-site public art in an amount no less than 2% of the total project construction cost.

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- ii. Project **must** retain an artist or artists as part of the project team or as a separate contractor to design and install art in a location that is visible and accessible to the general public at street level.
 - iii. Project **must** demonstrate that public art is sufficiently durable for outside installation and urban environments and does not constitute a hazard to safety or accessibility.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Expand upon existing arts programs that enhance pedestrian experiences, such as the City of Austin’s Art in Public Places program or partnership with other organizations implementing public art.
 - ii. Provide murals at street level to visually break up blank facades and enhance the pedestrian experience.
 - iii. Provide public art with interpretive elements, such as storytelling about local historical or cultural contexts.
 - iv. Commission local Austin artisans and artists for the design, construction, and installation of public art.

E10. Provide a Publicly Accessible Restroom and/or Drinking Fountain

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by expanding the availability of restroom facilities for visitors.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Provide** at least one of the two options below:
 - A no-cost all-gender indoor or outdoor restroom or restrooms directly accessible from the public right-of-way with at least one toilet and one sink or hand-washing station per restroom. **Include** a maintenance plan for regular cleaning and operations of a public restroom.
 - Publicly-accessible water fountains located either in the planting zone, frontage zone of the streetscape, or a publicly accessible plaza. The fountains **must** be directly accessible from the sidewalk. **Include** a maintenance plan for regular cleaning and maintenance of the fountains. Water fountains **should** provide chilled and filtered water with water bottle filling stations and pet bowls where possible.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. A prefabricated or custom self-standing public restroom with utility connections along right-of-way and outside of the clear pedestrian zone.

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- ii. An indoor public restroom along the front facade facing the right-of-way and accessible signage.
- iii. Include a baby changing station in the public restroom
- iv. Establish a program or commit to participation in a previously-established program with other entities for private property restroom sharing and provide accessible signage.
- v. A stand-alone water fountain in the planting zone along the sidewalk
- vi. A wall-mounted water fountain facing the sidewalk along the building frontage
- vii. Include a water bottle filler in the public water fountain

E11. Provide Inclusive Open Space

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Mobility & Connectivity ▾ Equity & Affordability ▾
Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by providing open space that supports a feeling of safety, inclusion, comfort, and ease of use and movement for people of all ages, abilities, religions, colors, national origins, sexual orientations, races, and sexes.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Parks and publicly accessible plazas ***must*** remain open to the public and ***should*** not be gated.
 - ii. Projects ***must*** provide a minimum contiguous area of 600-800 sf and a minimum horizontal dimension of 15' at the ground level for use as a publicly accessible courtyard or open space. Projects with site areas less than 20,000 sf may provide a publicly accessible plaza with a minimum area of 400sf and a min horizontal dimension of 15'.
 - iii. Projects ***should*** provide multiple points of entry and exit that are intuitive and clearly visible for all ground-level open spaces
 - iv. Projects ***should*** provide direct access to the sidewalk clear and direct egress to open spaces from the street without requiring users to enter a building or semi-private area to access
 - v. Open space access points ***should*** connect with nearby trails and greenways, providing crosswalks and bike crossings where streets intersect.
 - vi. Projects ***should*** provide flexible, programmable space such as a location for food trucks, coffee kiosks, and pop-up events.

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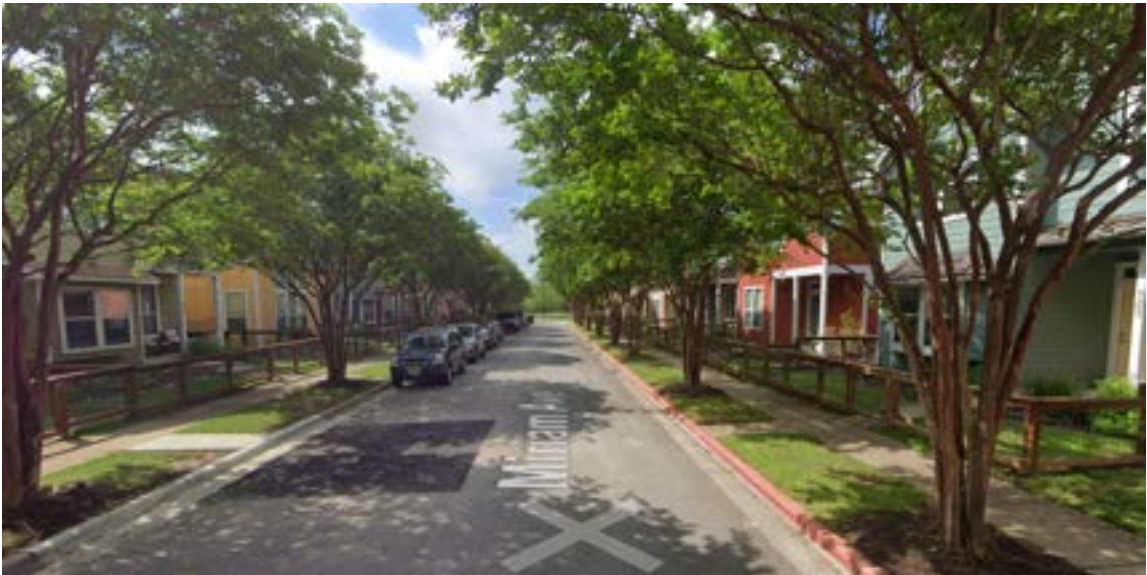
- vii. Projects ***should*** provide weatherproof power receptacles and water/sewer connections in plazas, courtyards, and open spaces for multi-functional use, including temporary uses such as food trucks.
 - viii. Projects ***should*** provide programming, enhancements, and spatial accommodations for users with special needs and mobility challenges.
 - ix. Projects ***should*** provide programming and spatial accommodations for children and their guardians.
 - x. Projects ***should*** provide fall protection wherever a drop greater than 20 inches exists
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Street-facing courtyards or side courtyards with multiple defined entries that open to the right-of-way and building entrances.
 - ii. Planting species to provide variation in character, define multiple levels of canopy, provide seasonal color and interest, and offer sensory experiences such as smell and touch.
 - iii. Pavers and other human-scaled building materials in public spaces.
 - iv. Seating incorporated into planters and retaining walls at or around 18” in height at least 15” in width for seating and resting.
 - v. Building facades and overhangs that are not excessive in height or scale.
 - vi. Aromatic planting and kinetic elements make environments more welcoming to people with neurodiversity like Autism
 - vii. Extra space for stroller parking
 - viii. Wide sidewalks and planting zones to provide safe design for those with mobility challenges like wheelchair users and the elderly, and impulse control issues like children and pets.
 - ix. Publicly-accessible play equipment or play areas with seating for parents nearby
 - x. Use Trauma-informed design principles
(<https://traumainformedhousing.poah.org>)
 - xi. Use DeafScape design standards
(<https://www.designwithdisabledpeoplenow.com>)
 - xii. Braille signs or other accommodations for the visually impaired.

E12. Create a Sense of Enclosure Around the Sidewalk

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Mobility & Connectivity ▾
Equity & Affordability ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾

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- d. **Intent:** Enhance the active transportation user experience by clearly differentiating the pedestrian realm as a separate human-scaled space from the larger street in a way that maintains public safety.
- e. **Conditions:**
- i. **Provide** either:
 - Regularly spaced, vertical, architectural or vegetative elements spaced at approximately 30' o.c. or less. These element must be no less than 7 feet tall; OR
 - A continuous lower vertical element along the entire street frontage no less than 18 inches tall. Any portions over 3 feet in height **must** be a minimum of 50% transparent.
 - ii. Where a vegetative barrier is used, a continuous vegetative barrier of evergreen plants with a mature height of no more than 3' **meets these guidelines**. So long as no less than 75% of the barrier has a height of at least 18 inches at maturity.
 - iii. Visual acuity **must** be maintained between 3' and 7' from the finished elevation of the sidewalk. Heights are measured at plant maturity.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. A continuous canopy of trees planted between the sidewalk and the roadbed. Large trees should be spaced at approximately 30' o.c. Where utility compatible species are used, the spacing should be no more than 20' o.c.



- ii. Trellis
- iii. Colonnade
- iv. Low wall
- v. Low vegetative barrier

E13. Design Buildings for the Human-Scale

- a. Applicability: Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. Priority: Tier 1 ▾
- c. Values: Design Excellence ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
- d. Intent: Enhance the active transportation user experience by incorporating human scale and proportion into the building facade design.
- e. Conditions:
 - i. The first 1-3 stories ***must*** be architecturally distinct from the upper floors.
 - ii. Mid-rise and high-rise buildings should be segmented into multiple masses and scales, incorporating human-scale elements at the lower levels. Avoid creating monolithic, vertical structures with a single, large footprint.
 - iii. Sheltering structures like overhangs, canopies, awnings, and arcades ***should*** have a clear height of no more than 14 feet.
 - iv. The first 1-3 stories ***should*** use materials and fenestration patterns that reflect the scale of the human body. Use materials with small individual units or materials that provide tactile relief and shadow lines that break larger units into visibly distinguishable smaller units.
- f. Examples:
 - i. Use distinct facade treatments including projections, materials or massing to clearly define different uses at the lower levels.
 - ii. A continuous canopy, or awning, can break down the large scale of taller buildings.
 - iii. Mezzanine levels contribute to a more human scale in taller buildings by offering occupiable spaces where occupants can visually and audibly connect with pedestrians below, while also providing a lower-height shelter for them.
 - iv. Human scale can be achieved through architectural details with dimensions that relate to human proportions such as the size and coursing of masonry veneer.
 - v. Break large expanses of glass into smaller human-scaled sections with mullions or smaller window panes.

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300 Colorado Tower (Photo Credit: Aker Imaging)

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CORE PRINCIPLE F-

Promote Sustainability and Ecosystem Health

Thoughtful design combines aesthetics and functionality to enrich the surrounding community. It prioritizes sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity, and enhances the health and well-being of everyone who uses the space.

GUIDELINES –

F1. Provide a Significant Landscaped Area Designed to Promote Ecosystem Health

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Promote environmental health and biodiversity by providing significant landscape in publicly accessible areas.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. No less than 15% of your site area **must** be dedicated to an at-grade planting area or 50% of the roof area **must** be covered in a green roof.
 - ii. Green roofs provided to comply with this guideline **must** be intensive or semi-intensive and include a minimum 8 inch soil substrate.
 - iii. Vertical green walls and cascading planters **do not meet** this condition.
 - iv. Projects **should** demonstrate a strategy to sustain the health and maintenance of planting areas.
 - v. Projects **must** employ a layered planting plan. Planting areas **must** provide at least 2 layers of canopies (shade trees, understory trees, shrubs, or ground cover). Green roofs are not required to provide layered canopies.
 - vi. 75% of planting areas provided to comply with this guideline **should** be covered by plants after 3 years.
 - vii. Projects **must** provide a diversity of native and adapted plant species. One species **must not** make up more than 50% of the overall number of plants. No less than 80% of the plants **must** be native or adapted species per Texas Nursery and Landscape Association Best of Texas Landscape Guide OR Texas AgriLife Extension/City of Austin Grow Green Native and Adapted Landscape Plants.

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- viii. Planting areas ***should*** contain substantial soil mass to allow for ideal growth of each plant provided. Soil masses may overlap. Generally, the following soil volumes and soil depths ***should*** be provided:
 - Shade Trees: 1000 cu ft, measured with a 42 inch depth
 - Ornamental Trees: 200 cu ft, measured with a 36 inch depth
 - Shrubs: 18 cu ft, measured with a 24 inch depth
 - ix. Above grade planters may only be used where they meet the soil volume requirements.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Planting areas that create buffers between the public right-of-way and outdoor seating areas and courtyards
 - ii. Structural soil or suspended pavement systems to provide sufficiently-sized planting area within a constrained paved area
 - iii. Street trees in planting areas with shrubs and groundcover plants along the sidewalk
 - iv. Climbing vines that meet the above requirements and provide vertical screening of parking structures mechanical equipment
 - v. Planted rain gardens with a variety of planting species

F2. Promote Access to Nature and Natural Systems

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Promote environmental health and biodiversity by integrating landscaped areas into site design so that building users interact both physically and visually with the landscape.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. A minimum of 30% of street-level open spaces ***must*** be landscaped with native plantings. Monocultures are prohibited.
 - ii. A minimum of 20% of above-grade amenity areas and interior courtyard areas ***must*** be landscaped with native plantings. Monocultures are prohibited.
 - iii. Building facades ***must*** provide a direct line of sight to the outdoors from a minimum of 75% of all regularly occupied interior floor areas.
 - iv. ***Provide*** direct access from ground floor uses to outdoor amenity areas, open spaces, trails, and parks
 - v. Projects ***should*** provide innovative water reuse systems that daylight natural systems and provide opportunities for users or the public to engage with these systems.

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- vi. Projects ***should*** provide natural ventilation to all primary use spaces.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Significant planting areas provide micro-habitats for birds and other beneficial animal species.
 - ii. Design buildings, public spaces, and residential areas that offer views of green spaces, trees, and water.
 - iii. Interpretive signage can be provided to educate the public and site users about “green” features.
 - iv. Rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, and rainwater harvesting systems can be installed in courtyards or along the sidewalk to engage users and reuse rain to irrigate planting areas.

F3. Provide Bird-Safe Design

- g. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- h. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- i. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Climate & Environment ▾
- j. **Intent:** Promote environmental health and biodiversity by improving the visibility of building facades to minimize bird injuries and mortalities caused by collisions.
- k. **Conditions:**
 - i. All glass within the first 75 feet of the building, as measured from finished grade, ***must*** use bird-safe glazing. Alternatively, projects ***may*** implement structural shading or screening systems with equivalent performance.
 - ii. Bird-safe glazing ***must*** have a Threat Factor less than 30 as certified by the American Bird Conservancy.
 - iii. Commercial spaces ***should*** include occupancy sensor lighting that turns interior lights off when the space is not in use.
- l. **Examples:**
 - i. Provide patterned, opaque, or translucent glazing
 - ii. Utilize netting, screens, grilles, shutters, and/or exterior Shades in front of exterior glazing
 - iii. Bird-safe glazing film or fritted glass.

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Image Credit: ajc architects



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Photograph: Radomir Rezny/Alamy. The irregularity of the building facade allows birds to see it more clearly.



The New York Times building uses fritted glass clad with rods, which make its facade more visible to birds. Photograph: Daniel Slim/AFP/Getty Images

F4. Design for Adaptability & Resilience

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Climate & Environment ▾ Cultural Preservation ▾
- d. **Intent:** Promote environmental health and biodiversity by designing buildings to be flexible and adaptable for both current and future uses; and to withstand extreme weather events and increasing climate risks.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. **Provide** ceiling heights of 10' minimum on upper stories and 14' minimum for ground-floor uses
 - ii. Projects **must** locate all above-ground building utility lines and equipment within conditioned spaces
 - iii. Projects **should** design building elements to be simply disassembled or relocated
 - iv. Projects **should** include decentralized, redundant or compartmentalized building systems to promote resiliency and flexibility of operations, maintenance and repair.

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- v. Any on-site parking ***should*** be in an integrated parking garage designed with level floor plates, clear heights of no less than 10' OR in a stand-alone parking garage with active ground floor uses.
 - vi. Projects ***should*** provide and register a community Resilience Hub with the City of Austin that provides public shelter, a cooling/heating center, information sharing, electronic device charging, and resource sharing for emergency events. Resilience Hubs provide back-up power when City provided power is not available.
 - vii. Projects ***should*** conduct a climate risk assessment to determine the exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity of the site and project to an increase in heat, drought, flood, wildfire, and/or cold weather
 - viii. Projects ***should*** reduce climate vulnerabilities by minimizing exposure, decreasing sensitivity, and increasing adaptive capacity to climate impacts
 - ix. Projects ***should*** design redundancies into the project by increasing mobility options and connectivity, dual-feed or onsite backup power that supports emergency systems and designated common areas for at least 72 hours.
- f. **Examples:**
- i. Steel or heavy timber structures may use bolted (rather than welded) connections to support future disassembly
 - ii. Designing interior demising walls as non-load bearing allows for greater flexibility for future uses that may require larger floor plates.
 - iii. Including modular interior partition walls enables a space to be easily reconfigured while reusing building materials.
 - iv. Extra empty conduit and boxes allow for the addition of unfunded or unexpected technology in the future.
 - v. Recessed floor systems for distribution of power, data and HVAC for best adaptability.
 - vi. Dedicated space in the building for an onsite Resiliency Hub.
 - vii. Additional capacity in electrical panels.
 - viii. Solar power and/or generators can be used to provide backup power for Resilience Hubs.
 - ix. Passive lighting and thermal strategies can be used to ensure comfort and usability when building system fail. Vernacular and indigenous architecture can be used as a helpful references for climate appropriate passive strategies.

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Broadway Autopark Apartments; Wichita, KS (Photo: Shelden Architecture)



Image Courtesy of City of Tempe

F5. Design Projects for Sustainable Construction and Building Operations

- a. Applicability: Private Projects Public Projects
- b. Priority: Tier 1

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- c. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Climate & Environment ▾ Health, Safety, Welfare ▾
Mobility & Connectivity ▾
- d. **Intent:** Promote environmental health and biodiversity by using sustainable design practices to reduce material waste, emissions, and energy consumption.
- e. **Conditions:**
Projects ***must*** achieve one of the following certifications:
 - i. Austin Energy Green Building 3 Star Rating;
 - ii. 3 Petals of the Living Building Challenge;
 - iii. LEED Gold Certification; or
 - iv. SITES on projects where landscape areas significantly exceed building area.

F6. Minimize or Eliminate Automobile Parking On-Site

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Design Excellence ▾ Cultural Preservation ▾ Climate & Environment ▾
- d. **Intent:** Promote environmental health and biodiversity by prioritizing multimodal options and reducing accommodations for single occupant vehicles.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. In DMU & CDB zones, projects ***must not*** provide more than 40% of the parking ratios found in LDC: 25-6 [Appendix A](#)
 - ii. In all other zones, projects ***must not*** provide more than 60% of the parking ratios found in LDC: 25-6 Appendix A.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Do not provide automobile parking onsite apart from required accessible spaces.
 - ii. Execute a shared parking agreement for underutilized existing parking located off site.
 - iii. Support alternative modes of transportation by providing facilities for bicycles bicycles, scooters, and rideshare.
 - iv. Contract with a carshare company to provide a shared vehicle(s) for the building occupants.

CORE PRINCIPLE G-

Respect the Cultural, Historical, Environmental, and Physical Contexts of the Site

Design should respond to the immediate, local needs by utilizing local materials and honoring regional traditions and cultural practices. It should respect and incorporate the specific environmental conditions and features of the site. By designing with local character in mind, we create environments that are not only functional but also rich in meaning and connection.

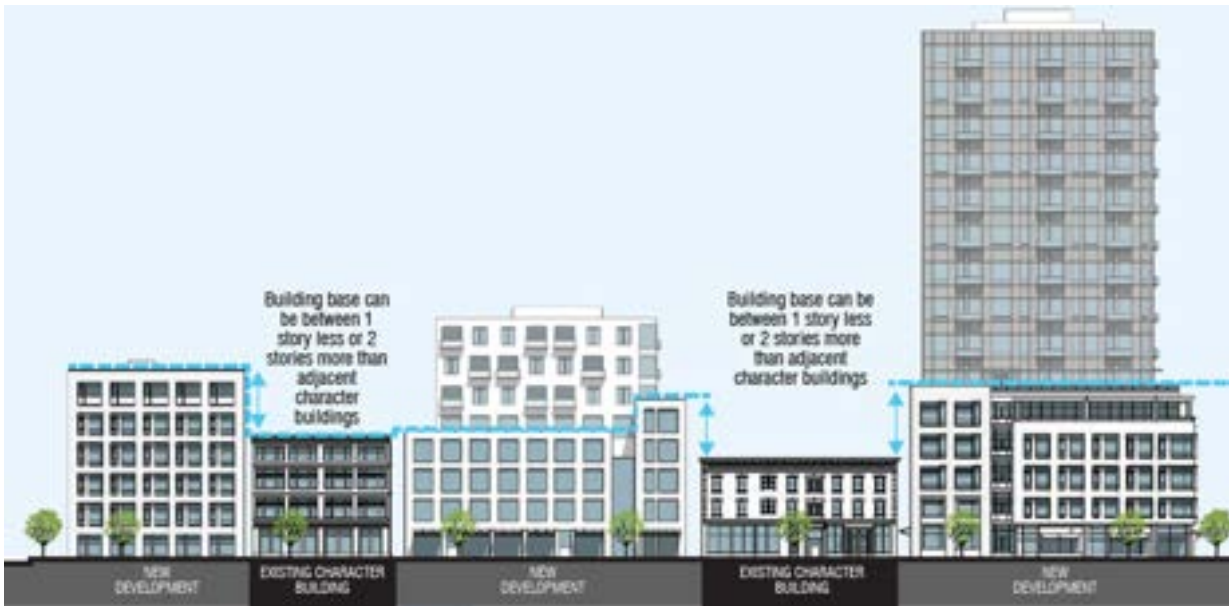
GUIDELINES –

G1. Respect the Adjacent Built Environment

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ including stand alone parking garages
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Cultural Preservation ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Respect the local character of the site by responding to adjacent buildings' materials, forms, and massing and by avoiding awkward or incompatible streetscapes.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. New projects ***must*** include a base with a height that is within 15 feet of the height of any adjacent historically significant pre-1950 building facades. Any portions of new buildings exceeding the height of the adjacent historically significant pre-1950 building facades by more than 15 feet ***must*** step back at least 15 feet from the face of the base facade.
 - ii. Where existing adjacent buildings have a consistent massing or height, the massing or height ***should*** be reflected in the new building.
 - iii. Projects ***should*** use similar or complementary materials as surrounding adjacent significant pre-1950 buildings.
 - iv. Building massing ***should*** align with the horizontal rhythm and granularity of nearby adjacent significant pre-1950 buildings to foster a cohesive urban fabric.
 - v. Buildings ***should*** be thoughtfully located relative to one another in order to create programmable outdoor space between them.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Make the base of the building the same height as the adjacent historic

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- ii. building and provide a tower set behind a terrace on top of the base. Utilize similar materials used on adjacent character buildings if they are durable and are of good quality.



G2. Amplify Austin's History, Culture, and Character

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ Public Infrastructure ▾
including stand alone parking garages
- b. **Priority:** Tier 1 ▾
- c. **Values:** Cultural Preservation ▾ Design Excellence ▾ Climate & Environment ▾
- d. **Intent:** Respect the local character of the site by utilizing local materials and construction techniques as well as local artisans.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Projects **must** use quality locally sourced materials, where appropriate.
 - ii. **Do not** create nostalgic reproductions to mimic or replicate historical styles and designs from the past. New buildings should contribute to the existing design styles, while being architecturally distinctive.
 - iii. Building design **must** utilize appropriate design responses to Austin's local character.
 - iv. Projects **should** utilize local artists and artisans.
 - v. Projects **should** provide design responses that acknowledge gateways and significant intersections of Austin when located within two blocks of these areas.
 - vi. Projects **must** provide designs that acknowledge local and state cultural districts when they are located within the boundaries of these districts.
 - vii. Projects **must** retain creative spaces and music venues in redeveloped properties in local and state cultural districts when located within the

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boundaries of these districts, to retain the continuity of these designated districts.

f. Examples:

- i. Commission local artists for public artwork.
- ii. Provide designs that contribute to the cultural heritage and artistic vision of a district, making the district recognizable and appealing.
- iii. Provide designs that create a system of Historical/Cultural/Information points which could establish a set of strategic points within the city that would both unify as well as mark unique places in the urban context.
- iv. Provide space in new developments for local businesses displaced by the redevelopment of the property and explore incentive opportunities to support this goal.
- v. Explore opportunities to express local history and identity through functional and ornamental design elements and works of civic art.
- vi. Provide building elements that tell the history of the area it's located in.
- vii. Provide plaques mounted on buildings, on transit shelters, murals, commemorative sculpture, elements in the sidewalk, walking tour brochures.
- viii. Use vernacular and indigenous architecture as a guide to determine passive design strategies that are most applicable.

G3. Respond to Daily and Seasonal Cycles of the Site

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾ including stand alone parking garages
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Cultural Preservation ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Respect the local character of the site by incorporating design elements that celebrate the daily and seasonal solar path, lunar cycles, seasons, and geological time frames.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Projects ***must*** provide at least one design element that celebrates the daily or seasonal solar path, the lunar cycles, the seasons, or the geological time frame of the project site or the area the site is located in.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Placing a sundial in courtyards allows it to serve as both a timekeeping device and a decorative landscape feature. Combining sundials with other features, such as solar panels or lighting, can create dynamic structures that adapt to the sun's path throughout the day.
 - ii. Use a variety of plants that bloom or change color at different times throughout the year to allow the building to reflect the seasonal changes.
 - iii. Allow for unobstructed views of surrounding vegetation, making it easy to observe changes in foliage throughout the year.

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- iv. Designing movable shading devices or panels that adjust according to the season can reflect changes in the surrounding foliage.
- v. Implementing sensors and automated systems that adjust lighting, heating, and cooling based on occupancy and time of day.
- vi. Creating spaces that reflect different historical periods or significant events through architectural features, landscaping, or public art can celebrate the timeline of the area.
- vii. Positioning buildings and windows to maximize sunlight during the day while minimizing heat gain in warmer months can enhance comfort and energy efficiency.



Skymap, Westcave Preserve. Photo Credit: Ron Sprouse

G4. Further Existing City Plans and Policies

- a. Applicability: **Private Projects** **Public Projects** **Public Infrastructure**
- b. Priority: **Tier 1**
- c. Values: **Climate & Environment** **Mobility & Connectivity** **Design Excellence**

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- d. **Intent:** Respect the local character of the site by improving upon existing city plans, districts, and policies.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Projects ***must*** show that they enhance at least 50% of the applicable city plans, districts, and policies listed below.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Use strategies that enhance the Downtown Plan
 - ii. Use strategies that enhance the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan
 - iii. Use strategies that enhance the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan
 - iv. Use strategies that enhance Austin Core Transportation Plan
 - v. Use strategies that enhance the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint
 - vi. Use strategies that enhance the Austin Climate Equity Plan
 - vii. Use strategies that utilize the Austin Historic Design Guidelines
 - viii. Use strategies that enhance the Great Streets Master Plan
 - ix. Use strategies that enhance the appropriate Corridor Plan
 - x. Use strategies that enhance the appropriate Area Regulating Plans

G5. Preserve Existing Building Facades at Street-Level

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Climate & Environment ▾ Cultural Preservation ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Respect the local character of the site by reusing existing buildings and facades.
- e. **Conditions:**
 - i. Projects ***must*** preserve a minimum of 75% of the area of the street facing building façade.
- f. **Examples:**
 - i. Preserve facades, original ironworks, railings, bricks, interpretive components, and educational signage.

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<https://www.djc.com/news/re/12068201.html>

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<https://hunterscapital.com/dunn-motor-building/>



<https://www.eatinseattle.com/2020/08/31/chophouse-row-announces-new-pop-ups-retailers-restaurants-and-community-support/>

G6. Design Buildings to be Beautiful from a Distance

- a. **Applicability:** Private Projects ▾ Public Projects ▾
- b. **Priority:** Tier 2 ▾
- c. **Values:** Cultural Preservation ▾ Design Excellence ▾
- d. **Intent:** Respect the local character of the site by positively contributing to Austin's skyline and visual identity.

Urban buildings are not only experienced up close but also viewed from a distance, where they play a key role in shaping Austin's skyline and visual identity. The skyline serves as a beacon, representing our home and everything the city offers. Iconic views create lasting memories and enhance our connection to the city. Terminating vistas, even from just a few blocks away, contribute to a shared sense of place, often defined by the building at the end of the view. Views from elevated spaces like windows, balconies, or terraces provide perspective and emotional resonance, offering insight into the city's design and character. As Austin grows vertically, it's important to consider how buildings are seen from afar and ensure that new developments enhance our collective experience of the city.

- e. **Conditions:**

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- i. Building roof forms ***must*** be cohesive and integral to the building's overall form while also complementing the rooflines of the adjacent existing buildings.
- ii. Designs ***must*** architecturally screen all rooftop mechanical equipment from view.
- iii. Buildings ***must*** provide articulation on more than 50% of the facade area as calculated for each elevation individually.

f. Examples:

- i. Low-Rise Buildings (1-5 stories) to provide an intuitive sense of scale and effectively communicate a design concept and reflect the rhythm, horizontal, and vertical scale of the surrounding buildings
 - Horizontal articulation- visually break the facade design horizontally, composing wide buildings as a series of distinct rows, using architectural projections, materials, or massing to:
 - a. Visibly communicate the contextual rhythm of historic platting or building widths, and
 - b. Visibly communicate the rhythm related to repeated building components, structural bays, or stacked unit layouts.
 - Vertical articulation: For 3-5 storey buildings, visually break the building facade into the following two legible layers with distinct facade treatments- using projections, materials, or massing:
 - a. Base: The ground story
 - b. Top: All upper stories
- ii. Mid-Rise Buildings (6-14 stories) to provide an intuitive sense of scale and effectively communicate a design concept and reflect the rhythm, horizontal, and vertical scale of the surrounding buildings
 - Horizontal articulation- visually break the facade design horizontally, composing wide buildings as a series of distinct rows, using architectural projections, materials, or massing to:
 - a. Visibly communicate the contextual rhythm of historic platting or building widths, and
 - b. Visibly communicate the rhythm related to repeated building components, structural bays, or stacked unit layouts.
 - Vertical articulation: Visually break the building facade into the following three legible layers with distinct facade treatments- using projections, materials, or massing:
 - a. Base: The bottom 1-3 stories, including the ground floor.
 - b. Top: At least 1 story but no more than the base, located at the top.
 - c. Middle: At least twice the height of the base, situated between the base and top.

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- iii. High-Rise Buildings (15 stories or more) to provide an intuitive sense of scale and effectively communicated a design concept and enhance the city skyline:
 - Base: The bottom portion of the building includes the lowest levels. These should include shopfronts, should provide thickness, depth and articulation, and avoid long expanses of floor to ceiling glazing. The base must be articulated as a Low-Rise or Mid-Rise Building according to the above conditions.
 - Tower: Articulate tall building towers so they are architecturally recognizable from the base. The tower should be setback from the base by no less than 10 feet for at least 75% of the tower perimeter along street lot lines.
 - Crown: Design the top of the tower to be cohesive and integral to the architectural design concept of the tower. Avoid crowns that are disjointed from the tower design.
- iv. Extend parapets or incorporate decorative metal panels to screen rooftop mechanical yards.

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