CITY OF LAGUNA WOODS

OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

OCTOBER 2026

PREPARED FOR:

City of Laguna Woods
24264 El Toro Road
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

PREPARED BY:

JZMK Partners
3080 Bristol Ave, Suite 350
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

JZMK
PARTNERS

ADOPTED BY:

Ordinance No. 26-XX

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 6

1.1 Purpose . . . 8
1.2 Organization . . . 9
1.3 Applicability . . . 10
1.4 User Guide . . . 13
1.5 Relationship With General Plan & Zoning Code . . . 14
1.6 Terminology . . . 15
1.7 Measurements . . . 20
1.8 Prohibited Design Elements . . . 22

2 SITE DESIGN 22

2.1 Publicly Accessible Open Space . . . 28
2.2 Vehicular Access & Parking . . . 32
2.3 Bicycle Circulation & Parking . . . 33
2.4 Pedestrian Access & Circulation . . . 34
2.5 Site Lighting . . . 37

3 BUILDING DESIGN 40

3.1 Massing . . . 46
3.2 Building Orientation . . . 57
3.3 Neighborhood Transition . . . 59
3.4 Facade Design . . . 60
3.5 Ground Floor Uses . . . 64
3.6 Street Facing Transparency . . . 67
3.7 Utilities, Service Areas & Building Equipment . . . 69

4 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE 72

4.1 Overview And Applications . . . 74
4.2 Laguna Woods Revival . . . 76
4.3 Roofs . . . 78
4.4 Walls and Windows . . . 79
4.5 Materials and Colors . . . 80
4.6 Decorative Accents and Details . . . 82

5 LANDSCAPE 84

5.1 Landscape Materials & Vegetation . . . 86
5.2 Hardscape . . . 93
5.3 Walls & Fences . . . 94
5.4 Landscape Lighting . . . 95
5.5 Site Furnishings . . . 97

INTRODUCTION

1

1.1 PURPOSE

1.2 ORGANIZATION

1.3 APPLICABILITY

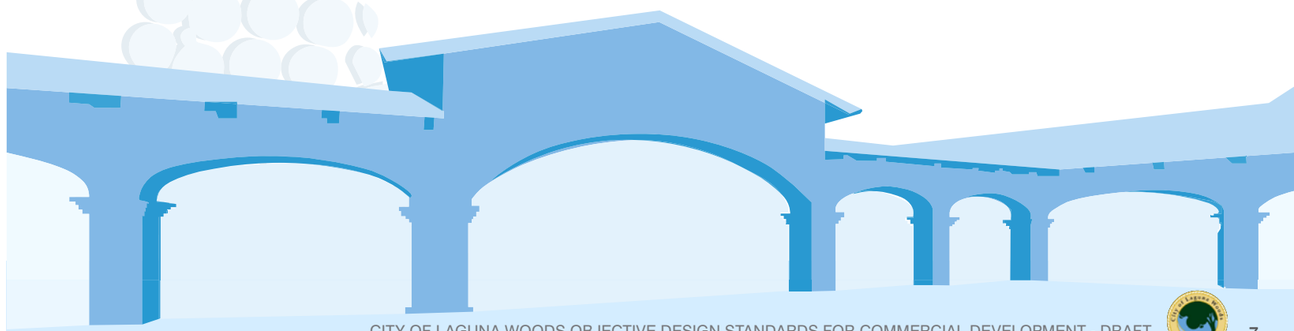
1.4 USER GUIDE

1.5 RELATIONSHIP WITH GENERAL PLAN & ZONING CODE

1.6 TERMINOLOGY

1.7 MEASUREMENTS

1.8 PROHIBITED DESIGN ELEMENTS



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

1.1.1 OVERVIEW

The development of commercial projects in the City of Laguna Woods ("City"), is regulated by a variety of documents including the Laguna Woods General Plan and the Laguna Woods Municipal Code.

To further support consistent, high-quality commercial development and reinvestment, the City has established Objective Design Standards that provide clear, measurable, and enforceable criteria for project review. These standards are intended to streamline the development review process by reducing ambiguity, facilitating predictable outcomes, and ensuring that projects can be reviewed in an efficient and consistent manner.

The Objective Design Standards apply to commercial development, including new construction and site improvements, and are designed to promote functional site design, high-quality architecture, and cohesive visual character throughout the City. By establishing objective criteria, the City aims to support economic vitality while maintaining and enhancing the community's built environment.

1.1.2 GOALS

The primary goals of the Objective Design Standards are to:

a. Preserve the character of the community by balancing the form and design of existing development with new construction techniques and styles.

b. Encourage human-scaled buildings that promote high quality site and building design.

c. Emphasize a pedestrian-oriented environment where buildings and public realm design are cohesive and complementary of a diverse range of uses.

1.2 ORGANIZATION

The Objective Design Standards are organized into the following five chapters:

1. Introduction

2. Site Design

3. Building Design

4. Architectural Style

5. Landscape

1.3 APPLICABILITY

1.3.1 APPLICABLE ZONING DISTRICTS

These Objective Design Standards apply to the following zoning districts:

1. Community Commercial (CC)
2. Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
3. Professional and Administrative Office (PA)

1.3.2 APPLICABLE PROJECT TYPES

These Objective Design Standards apply to the entire area of projects that include one (1) or more of the following:

1. Addition of any new structure(s)
2. Substantial renovation of any existing structure(s), defined as the demolition, removal, or replacement of fifty percent (50%) or more of exterior walls, roofs, or canopies, when the proposed design, materials or overall appearance differ from the existing conditions
3. Renovation of any existing structure(s) that results in an addition of twenty five percent (25%) or more to the existing square footage or five hundred (500) sq. ft., whichever is less
4. Any alteration that adds one or more new floors
5. Any alteration that increases the number of drive-through lanes or fuel pumps
6. Any discretionary development project for which the City Council has conditioned its approval on compliance with these Objective Design Standards

Exceptions to the applicability of these standards include the following:

1. Routine maintenance activities where the existing materials, design, and form are retained, regardless of the project's square footage
2. Interior renovations that do not modify the footprint or massing of an existing structure

The following provisions further clarify the relationship of these standards to other applicable requirements:

1. These standards supplement the underlying base zoning district. In case of conflict between these standards, the Objective Design Standards will apply
2. All new development projects are required to conform to the architectural style described in Chapter 4 of these Objective Design Standards. All other projects are encouraged to do the same

1.3.3 EXCEPTIONS & EXEMPTIONS

All applicable projects are required to comply with Objective Design Standards. Should a project not be able to or choose not to adhere to the Objective Design Standards, a project may seek approval through the following paths:

1. Minor Exceptions and Exemptions: If an applicant is unable to meet certain Objective Design Standards, the applicant may request up to three (3) exceptions or exemptions. This allows for limited discretionary review and flexibility for projects that may have a physical constraint. The City Manager and/or their designee may approve or deny requests for exceptions or exemptions or refer such determination to the City Council. Determinations made by the City Manager and/or their designee may be appealed to the City Council.

   Requests shall be made by the applicant in writing to the City Manager.

   a. Applicants requesting an exception or exemption shall provide findings on how their project is consistent with the Purpose statements for each chapter where an exception or exemption is requested.
   b. Applicants shall document constraints to meeting the standard.
   c. Exceptions or exemptions to quantitative standards may vary by no more than five percent (5%) above or below the stated requirement.
   d. The City Manager has the discretion to defer determinations to the City Council.
2. Discretionary Review Path: Applicants may choose the Discretionary Review Path if they choose not to meet the Objective Design Standards. Projects utilizing this path will be subject to the applicable discretionary review procedures, including public hearings and extended review timelines, as outlined in Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 11.

1.3.4 DETERMINATIONS

Prior to approving exceptions or exemptions, the City Manager and/or their designee shall make the following determinations:

1. Approval aligns with the requirements outlined in the vision, intent, and purpose of the objective design standards.
2. Approval does not alter the intent of the objective design standards;
3. Approval constitutes a sound precedent for other similar situations; and
4. The resulting project is consistent with the General Plan.

1.4 USER GUIDE

The Objective Design Standards are intended to be used by applicants, property owners, and the City in connection with the review and approval of applicable projects.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Objective Design Standards, Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 11 (Buildings and Construction), and Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 13 (Zoning) prior to designing projects or submitting land use applications to the City. After reviewing those documents, applicants are encouraged to schedule a pre-application meeting with the City's Planning & Environmental Services Department to discuss specific application requirements.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP WITH GENERAL PLAN & ZONING CODE

The Objective Design Standards work as a baseline, creating citywide standards that apply to applicable projects. This document is intended to work in tandem with the Laguna Woods General Plan and Laguna Woods Municipal Code.

- **General Plan.** California Government Code Section 65300 requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan to guide physical development. The Laguna Woods General Plan reflects the City of Laguna Woods' intentions about land use and its relationship to circulation, conservation, housing, noise, open space, and safety. In the event of a conflict between the Laguna Woods General Plan and the Objective Design Standards, the Laguna Woods General Plan shall prevail.
- **Laguna Woods Municipal Code.** The Laguna Woods Municipal Code is a collection of all ordinances adopted by the City Council of a general and permanent nature. The Objective Design Standards were adopted by such an ordinance. Conflicts between the balance of the Laguna Woods Municipal Code and the Objective Design Standards shall be resolved in accordance with applicable laws and City procedures.
- **California Building Standards Code.** The Objective Design Standards do not replace or supercede applicable provisions of the California Building Standards Code. In the event of a conflict between the California Building Standards Code and the Objective Design Standards, the California Building Standards Code shall prevail.

1.6 TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are used throughout the Objective Design Standards and are defined below.

Active Frontage: Active frontages are building frontages with active uses where there is visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floor. Active uses include retail stores, restaurants, markets, galleries, libraries, community centers, common areas and offices that generate high pedestrian traffic throughout the day.

Alley: A public thoroughfare used as a secondary vehicular means of access.

Arched: Having a vertical curve where the height of the curve is either (1) exactly half of the width of the curve, or (2) shorter in height than the actual curve.

Awning: An architectural projection that provides weather protection, building identity, or decoration, and is wholly supported by the building to which it is attached. An awning is often comprised of a lightweight frame structure over which a cover is attached.

Belvederes: An architectural feature designed to provide a beautiful view—such as a rooftop pavilion, terrace, balcony, tower, or open-sided structure.

Balcony: An external extension of an upper floor of a building, enclosed by a screen, balusters, or railings.

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

Balustrade: Multiple balusters supporting a railing on a balcony.

Baluster: A post, upright support, or vertical piece that supports a railing on a balcony.

Building: Has the same meaning as the term defined in Section 13.06.010(c)(130) of the Laguna Woods Municipal Code, as amended from time to time or replaced with a successor statute.

Building Envelope: The physical separator between the interior and exterior of a building, including the foundation, floors, walls, roof, windows, and doors.

Building Facade Length: The overall length of a facade without a full break in the building (see full break definition below).

Building Facade Full Break: A significant interruption or separation in the facade, such as a passageway, courtyard, or a change in building height that visually and structurally divides the building.

Building Projection: The part or feature of a building which extends outside of the enclosing walls. It can be a building feature that is mounted on, and/or extends from the surface of the building wall or facade, typically above ground level.

Carport: Any parking area that is wholly or partially covered by a structure of any kind.

Cart Corral: A designated, anchored structure in a retail or grocery store parking lot designed for customers to return shopping carts. These structures can be metal, often open-ended on one or both sides for easy access, and are strategically placed in parking aisles to encourage shoppers to return carts after loading their vehicles.

Cavity: A wall built of masonry units or of concrete, or a combination of these materials, arranged to provide an airspace within the wall, and in which the inner and outer parts of the wall are tied together with metal ties.

Clerestory: An upper story or row of windows rising above the adjoining parts of the roof, designed to admit light into the inner space of a building.

Connection: A space that links one physical space to another. It may be traversable by pedestrian, bicycle or automobile traffic.

Cornice: The uppermost division of an entablature; a projecting shelf along the top of a wall supported by a series of brackets; the exterior trim at the meeting of a roof and wall, consisting of soffit, fascia, and crown molding.

Development Parcel: Any tract of land on which development can occur. This includes platted lots and un-platted parcels but excludes any public right-of-way.

Dry-Stacked, Surface-Bonded Wall: A wall built of concrete masonry units where the units are stacked dry, without mortar on the bed or head joints, and where both sides of the wall are coated with a surface-bonding mortar.

Exterior: Any outer surface that is or would be visible from any point outside the parcel on which it is located assuming topography was flat and no other buildings, structures, fences, walls, landscaping, or similar visual obstructions were present.

Facade: Any exterior face of a building.

Facade Plane: Any stretch of a building facade existing along the same axis line, regardless of pattern differentiation or change in rhythm.

Facade Composition: The expression of a facade through a variety of techniques such as forms, patterns, fenestration, elements, details, materials, texture, finishes, etc. Facade Composition is used to create the architectural character and design theme of a building.

Facade Modulation: Used to shape a building's exterior massing, facade modulation is a change in building plane though the recess or projection of sections of a facade.

Facade Treatment: Facade Treatment area shall be defined as the total vertical surface area of a building facade, measured in elevation from finished grade to the top of the parapet or eave, and from one end of the facade to the other.

Foot-candle: A measurement of illumination on a one-square foot (ft.) surface from a uniform source of light.

Footprint: Footprint or building footprint provides the outline of a building drawn along the exterior walls, with a description of the exact size, shape, and location of its foundation.

Glass Curtain Wall: Aluminum-framed or other metal-framed window systems that are non-structural and house glass panels.

Gross Floor Area: Has the same meaning as the term is defined in Section 13.06.010(c)(420) of the Laguna Woods Municipal Code, as amended from time to time or replaced with a successor statute.

Ground Floor Office: Ground floor office refers to office uses located at the ground level that are oriented toward a public frontage and designed to contribute to pedestrian activity through elements such as transparent windows, entries facing the public realm, and visible interior activity. While typically less active than storefront commercial uses, ground floor office shall maintain a direct relationship with and visual connection to the adjacent pedestrian environment.

Height: The height of a structure is defined as the vertical distance from finished grade to the highest point of a structure.

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

Landscape Professional: A licensed landscape architect, licensed landscape contractor, or any other person authorized to design a landscape pursuant to California Business and Professions Code §§ 5500.1, 5615, 5641, 5641.1, 5641.2, 5641.3, 5641.4, 5641.5, 5641.6, 6701, 7027.5, California Code of Regulations Tit. 16, § 832.27, or California Food and Agriculture Code § 6721, as amended from time to time or replaced with a successor statute.

Light Box Sign: An illuminated sign that contains mechanisms to encapsulate, suspend, protect and/or display a discrete sheet of backlit film which may include images and/or text, and which is designed to transmit light through the film for increased image brightness, contrast, and/or color saturation.

Main Building Entry: The entrance to a building typically leading to a lobby, courtyard, or other large shared space that is accessed from the primary building frontage.

Neutral Color: A color that is not considered a primary color on any one or more of the following color models: CIE, CMYK, HEX, HSB, HSL, or RGB.

Parapet: A low protective wall or railing along the edge of a roof, balcony, or similar structure; in an exterior wall, the part entirely above the roof.

Parking/Loading: An essential zone for people and goods, providing separation between moving vehicles in the travel-way and people in the pedestrian realm. This zone can contain multiple uses along a street including commercial deliveries, parklets, on-street parking, and taxi zones. It can be used for mobility at specific times of the day.

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

Perimeter Length: The lineal distance as measured along the perimeter of a building, parcel, lot, etc.

Pilaster: A partial pier or column, often with a base, shaft, and capital, that is embedded in a flat wall and projects slightly; may be constructed as a projection of the wall itself.

Planter: An above grade container for planting.

Primary Building Frontage: The building frontage that abuts the most primary of streets, or Pedestrian Pathway surrounding the building. In the case of a through-lot, the primary building frontage could be on either public right-of-way.

Primary Facade Plane: Majority area of the facade that is in the same plane.

Projection: Projections (or building projection) is the part or feature of a building which extends outside of the enclosing walls. It can be a building feature that is mounted on, and/or extends from the surface of the building wall or facade, typically above ground level.

Private Street: Any street that is not owned by the City. Private streets often have public access easements to allow passage into or through a private development.

Roof Deck: The flat or sloped surface constructed on top of the exterior walls of a building or other supports for the purpose of enclosing the story below, or sheltering an area, to protect it from the elements, not including its supporting members or vertical supports.

Roof Covering: The covering applied to the roof deck for weather resistance, fire classification, or appearance.

Simple Design: A design that uses clean, basic forms with minimal surface decoration, avoids applied ornament such as scrollwork or carvings, and limits the number of different colors and materials used in a single furnishing or element.

Storefront Commercial: Storefront commercial refers to ground-floor retail, restaurant, or service uses that are directly accessible from the public frontage and designed to engage pedestrians through features such as transparent glazing, frequent entrances, and active displays. These uses shall provide a high level of visual and physical interaction between the interior space and the adjacent sidewalk or pedestrian path.

Structural Bay: The horizontal area of a building facade between two adjacent structural supports, such as columns, piers, or load-bearing walls.

Structure: Has the same meaning as the term is defined in Section 13.06.010(d)(790) of the Laguna Woods Municipal Code, as amended from time to time or replaced with a successor statute.

Transparency: The amount of transparent area on a building facade. The percentage of a building facade consisting of clear or lightly tinted glass located within windows, doors, or storefront systems that allows views into and out of the building.

Usable Open Space: The total combined open space areas of publicly accessible and private open spaces.

Wall: A vertical element with a horizontal length- to-thickness ratio greater than three, used to enclose space, whether load bearing or not. “Wall” specifically includes, but is not limited to, cavity walls, dry-stacked, surface-bonded walls, and parapets.

Wall Plane: The surface area that extends from the ground to the top of each wall. “Wall plane” specifically includes, but is not limited to, portions of walls located under eaves and overhangs. Where a single building has multiple wall planes along a single facade, the wall planes are additive and shall be considered a single wall plane.

1.7 MEASUREMENTS

1. Where this document references distances between or within parcels, the distance shall be measured from the outermost boundary lines of the closest parcels.
2. Where this document references distances between or within buildings, the distance shall be measured from the outermost wall of the closest points of each building.
3. Where this document identifies a setback from any parcel, the distance shall be measured from the outermost boundary line of the parcel to the closest point of the design feature or equipment setback which, for parking areas, shall be the edge of the asphalt, paving, or other parking surface closest to the parcel.
4. Where this document identifies a setback from any public street easement or right-of-way, the distance shall be measured from the outermost boundary line of the public street easement or right-of-way to the closest point of the design feature or equipment setback which, for parking areas, shall be the edge of the asphalt, paving, or other parking surface closest to the parcel.
5. Where this document identifies a percentage of landscape screening, the percentage shall be calculated by estimating the expected size and growth of the plantings at twelve (12) months (365 days) after the initial date of planting, as attested to by a landscape professional. Fractional values shall be rounded to the next highest whole number.
6. Where this document identifies the height of any wall or fence, the height shall be measured as set forth in Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 13.16.230, as amended from time to time or replaced with a successor statute.
7. Where this document identifies the height of any clerestory, the height shall be measured from the exterior base of the wall on which the clerestory is located to the base of the clerestory frame.
8. Where this document identifies the height of any balcony's balustrade or balusters, or openings therein, the height shall be measured from the exterior base of the balustrade or balusters to the top of the balustrade or balusters, or openings therein, as may apply, on the exterior side.
9. Where this document identifies a percentage of roof or wall cover, or number of windows or other design elements, fractional values shall be rounded to the next highest whole number.
10. Where this document identifies a required overhanging eave, the overhang shall be measured from the point the roof extends past the wall plane to the outermost edge of the eave.
11. Where this document identifies a required arched opening, the vertical curve of the arch opening shall be measured from the point the opening begins to curve.
12. Where this document identifies the size of open air gaps in the design of trash enclosures, the gap shall be measured as the area which encloses, with four (4), six (6), or eight (8) perpendicular lines, all points from any angle through which an object measuring more than one (1) in. in length by one (1) in. in width can be placed.

1.8 PROHIBITED DESIGN ELEMENTS

1. Bars installed on the exterior of a building or structure, when such bars (i) are located on or extend over any door, window, gate, or other openable, transparent, semi-transparent, or not fully opaque fixture or surface, and (ii) are spaced less than ten (10) in. apart.
2. Roll-up or rolling exterior doors, except when used for vehicular points of ingress or egress (e.g., entrances to parking garages) or for facilities located in the Residential Community-Maintenance Overlay Zoning District.
3. Chain link, plastic, vinyl, or woven wire fencing or gates including, but not limited to, fencing or gates of any kind with plastic or vinyl privacy inserts, except for temporary fencing during construction when permitted by the City.
4. Barbed tape, barbed wire, wire, razor wire, and similar security treatments on the exterior of a building or structure, or used with or for fencing or gates, except when used in connection with a civic, fire, or police building or structure.
5. Electrical conduits or raceways visible from the exterior of a building or structure, whether such electrical conduits or raceways are located on the interior or exterior of a building or structure.
6. Unfinished metal or wood surfaces (e.g., plywood) on the exterior of a building or structure, or used with or for fencing or gates.
7. Fluorescent, luminescent, neon, or sparkling paint or similar adhesive, dye, or pigment that, after application to a material, adds color, on the exterior of a building or structure, or used with or for fencing or gates.
8. More than three colors of paint or similar adhesive, dye, or pigment that, after application to a material, adds color, on any single exterior wall pane, including all doors, windows, balustrade, balusters, and surfaces on that wall, or any single fence or gate.
9. More than one color of glass within any single exterior window on a building or structure (gradients of color shall be considered multiple colors), or more than two colors of glass within all exterior windows on any single exterior wall pane.
10. Light box signs installed on the exterior of a building or structure, except for light box signs that are not visible from public right-of-way or located within forty (40) ft. of any residential zoned parcel.
11. Glass curtain walls installed as part of any exterior wall system.
12. Wood shingle or shake roofs.
13. Unnaturally colored glass, including mirrored, reflective, or brightly tinted glazing, installed on any exterior window, door, storefront, curtain wall, or other exterior glazing system.

SITE DESIGN

2

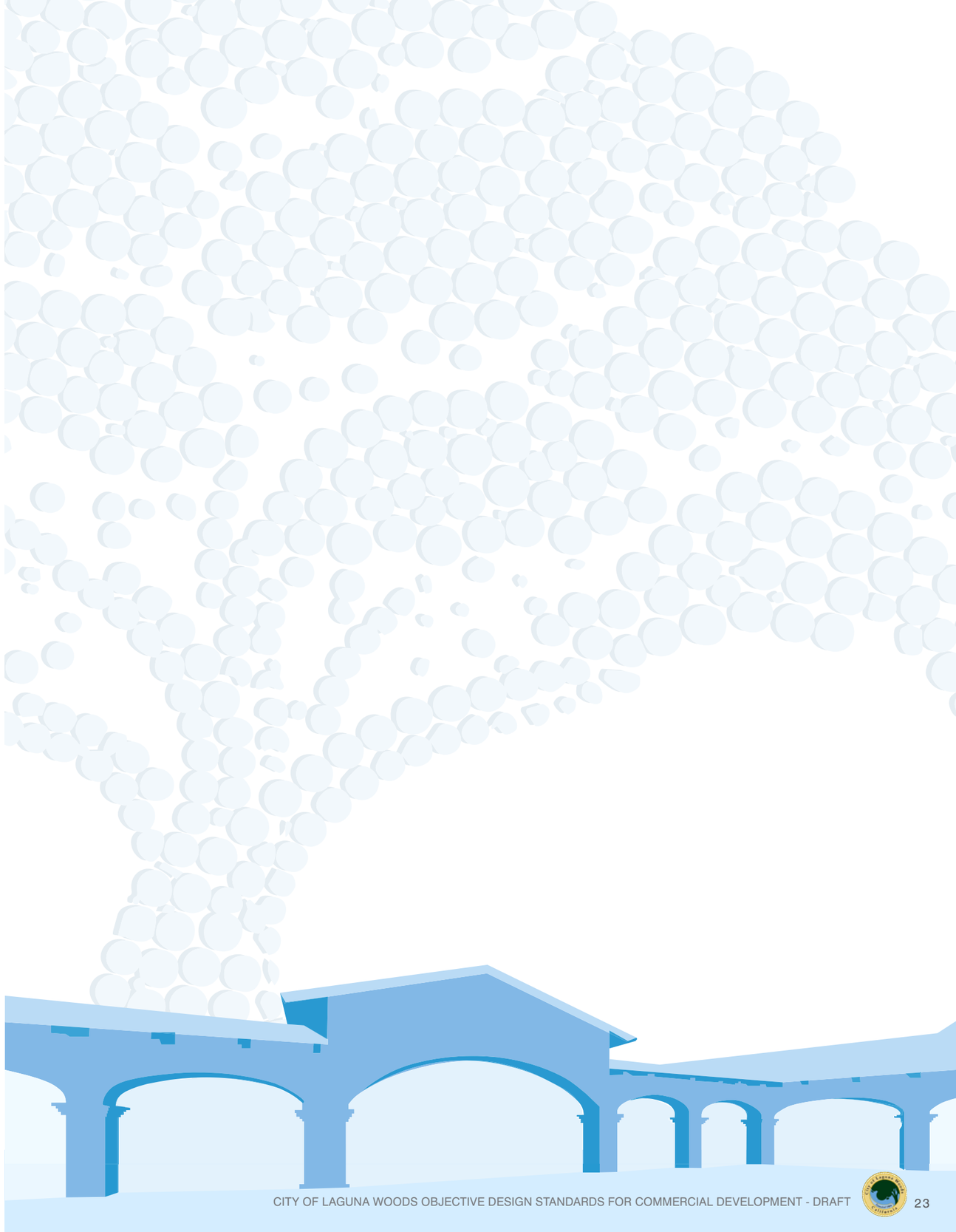
2.1 PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

2.2 VEHICULAR ACCESS & PARKING

2.3 BICYCLE CIRCULATION & PARKING

2.4 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS & CIRCULATION

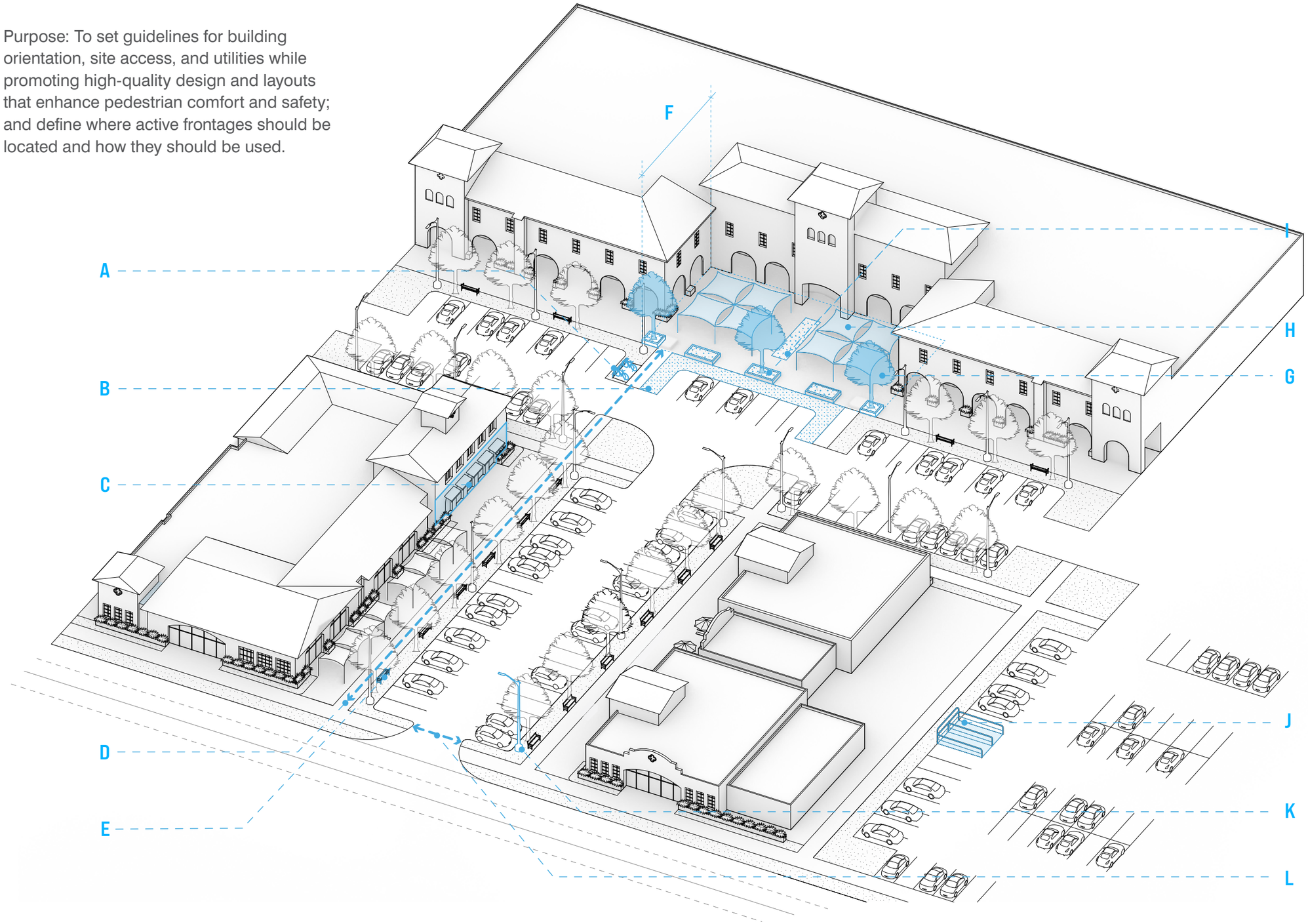
2.5 SITE LIGHTING



CHAPTER 02

SITE DESIGN

Purpose: To set guidelines for building orientation, site access, and utilities while promoting high-quality design and layouts that enhance pedestrian comfort and safety; and define where active frontages should be located and how they should be used.



A - Ch. 2.3.1 (4)
Short-term bicycle parking shall be located within two hundred (200) ft. of a visitor entrance or be monitored by a surveillance camera that retains all footage for at least seventy two (72) hours

B - Ch. 2.1.4 (5)
Publicly accessible open space located within or adjacent to parking areas shall be separated from drive aisles by a raised curb or edge with a minimum height of six (6) in., excepting ramps or other openings required by the California Building Standards Code or Laguna Woods Municipal Code, or by a landscaped buffer or landscaped parking island.

C - Ch. 2.1.4 (1)
Open space abutting an active frontage of a building

D - Ch. 2.1.5 (5)
Permanent seating (e.g., seat walls, planter ledges, benches, picnic tables, or seating steps) shall be provided at a minimum rate of one seat per five hundred (500) sq. ft. of publicly accessible open space. A minimum of one seat shall be provided for the first five hundred (500) sq. ft., and one (1) additional seat shall be required for each additional five hundred (500) sq. ft. or fraction thereof. Additionally, a minimum of one (1) wheelchair-accessible space shall be provided per five hundred (500) sq. ft. of open space. Each wheelchair-accessible space shall provide a minimum linear length of twenty four (24) in., a minimum depth of eighteen (18) in., and a minimum height of eighteen (18) in. above adjacent grade. Seating and wheelchair-accessible space elements may be extended in length or depth to satisfy multiple required seats, provided that each twenty four (24) in. of continuous seating length and eighteen (18) in. of depth counts as one seat.

E - Ch. 2.4.1 (8)
New development projects providing hundred (100) or more parking spaces shall provide designated pedestrian corridors connecting parking areas to building entrances, public sidewalks, and/or publicly accessible open space

F - Ch. 2.1.4 (2)
Publicly accessible open spaces shall have a minimum dimension in any direction of eighteen (18) ft.

G - Ch. 2.1.5 (9)
Publicly accessible open space of eight hundred (800) sq. ft. or less shall require at least one tree

H - Ch. 2.1.5 (7)
A minimum of thirty percent (30%) and a maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the publicly accessible open space shall be open to the sky. The remaining area shall incorporate shade elements such as trellises, pergolas, canopies, or similar shade structures to provide relief from sun exposure and support comfortable use of the space. Shade elements may utilize materials and be designed in manners that allow filtered light to pass through while limiting direct sunlight and heat gain and shall be open on at least two sides.

I - Ch. 2.1.5 (8)
A minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the publicly accessible open space shall be landscaped. Landscaping shall primarily consist of trees and other plantings that do not obstruct visibility, avoiding dense shrubs or vegetation where people or animals could hide.

J - Ch. 2.4.2
Cart return areas shall be provided within parking areas serving new and applicable retail uses

K - Ch. 2.5.3.1 (1)
Lighting in parking areas shall be maintained with a minimum of one (1) ft. candle of illumination at the ground level during hours of darkness, with a maximum of seven (7) ft. candles

L - Ch. 2.2.1 (1.a)
Shared driveway with a property abutting the project site

2 SITE DESIGN

2.1 PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

2.1.1 GENERAL OPEN SPACE REGULATIONS

All required open space shall be usable by all members of the public. This subsection is not intended to limit the rights of property owners under Section 2.2.5(4).

2.1.2 APPLICABILITY

Publicly accessible open space shall be required for all projects greater than or equal to two (2) acres in gross parcel area. These requirements are in addition to minimum provided for in the Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 13.

2.1.3 REQUIRED QUANTITY

The minimum on-site requirement for any project that qualifies under this section shall be two percent (2%) or more of the gross parcel area.

2.1.4 MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS

1. Publicly accessible open space shall be located adjacent to or abutting at least one (1) of the following:
   a. Public right-of-way
   b. An active frontage of a building
   c. A publicly accessible easement

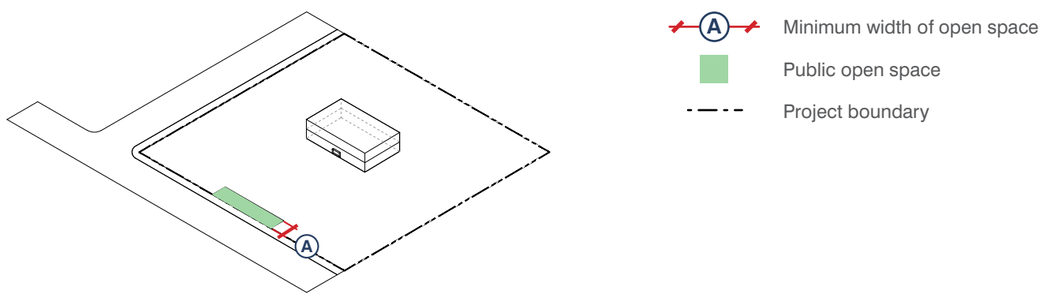


FIGURE 2.1: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ADJACENT TO OR ABUTTING A PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

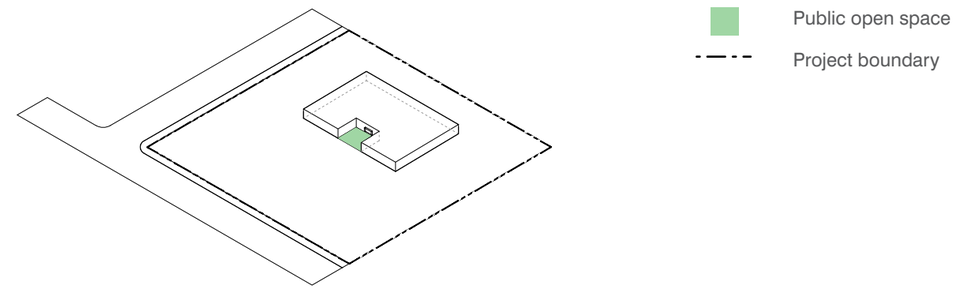


FIGURE 2.2: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ADJACENT TO OR ABUTTING ACTIVE FRONTAGE OF BUILDING

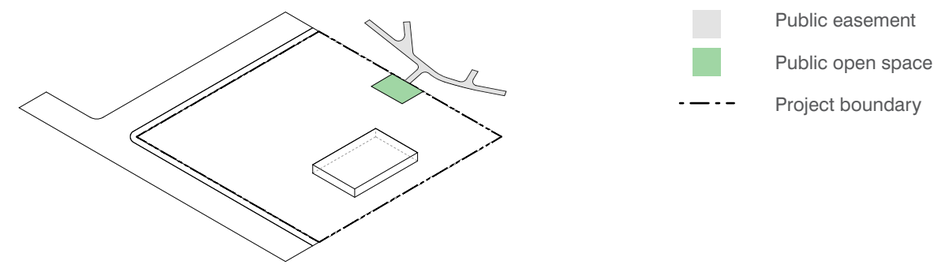


FIGURE 2.3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ADJACENT TO OR ABUTTING A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE EASEMENT

2. Publicly accessible open spaces shall have a minimum dimension in any direction of eighteen (18) ft.
3. The open space shall be clearly visible from the public realm. Where the open space is adjacent to or abuts an active frontage of a commercial building, it shall be oriented toward the primary entrance of the commercial use occupying that frontage with a direct pedestrian connection between the entrance and the open space.
4. Subdivision of the publicly accessible open space into multiple distinct areas is permitted only where each individual open space area is a minimum of one thousand and seven hundred (1,700) sq. ft. in size and meets all applicable requirements of this section.

5. Publicly accessible open space located within or adjacent to parking areas shall be separated from drive aisles by a raised curb or edge with a minimum height of six (6) in., excepting ramps or other openings required by the California Building Standards Code or Laguna Woods Municipal Code, or by a landscaped buffer or landscaped parking island.

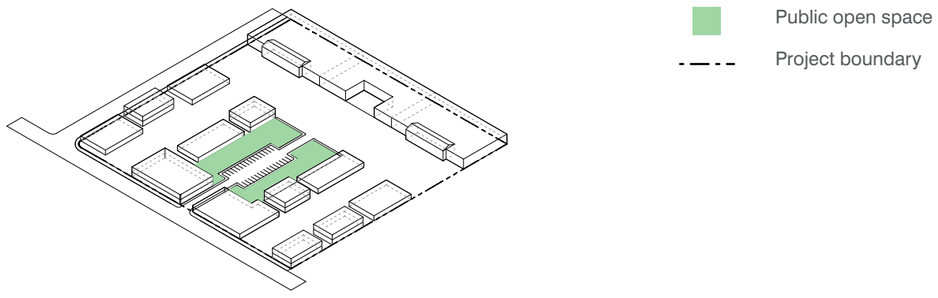


FIGURE 2.4: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AS AN ENTRY POINT TO THE COMMERCIAL CENTER

2.1.5 ADDITIONAL STANDARDS

Off-street parking and loading areas, driveways, service areas, utility equipment, air conditioner pads, outdoor dining areas, and storage structures shall not be counted as publicly accessible open space.

The following standards shall be met for all publicly accessible open spaces:

1. A public access easement shall be approved by the City Manager and/or their designee and recorded with the Orange County Clerk-Recorder Department for the entire publicly accessible open space.
2. Shall be publicly accessible at a minimum, from 7 am to 7 pm daily during daylight savings time and from 7 am to 5 pm daily during standard time.
3. Shall be accessible from a public right-of-way or publicly accessible easement, with clear signage located at and visible from the public right-of-way or publicly accessible easement identifying the type of open space, hours of access, and amenities. Where the public open space is adjacent to or abuts an active frontage of a commercial building, it shall be accessible by a pedestrian path connecting to a public right-of-way or publicly accessible easement, with signage provided at the entrance to the pedestrian path.
4. Property owners have the authority to establish rules of conduct to ensure appropriate use and safety of the publicly accessible open space including, but not limited to, enforcing trespassing laws.
5. Permanent seating (e.g., seat walls, planter ledges, benches, picnic tables, or seating steps) shall be provided at a minimum rate of one seat per five hundred (500) sq. ft. of publicly accessible open space. A minimum of one seat shall be provided for the first five hundred (500) sq. ft., and one (1) additional seat shall be required for each additional five hundred (500) sq. ft. or fraction thereof. Additionally, a minimum of one (1) wheelchair-accessible space shall be provided per five hundred (500) sq. ft. of open space. Each wheelchair-accessible space shall provide a minimum linear length of twenty four (24) in., a minimum depth of eighteen (18) in., and a minimum height of eighteen (18) in. above adjacent grade. Seating and wheelchair-accessible space elements may be extended in length or depth to satisfy multiple required seats, provided that each twenty four (24) in. of continuous seating length and eighteen (18) in. of depth counts as one seat.
6. Permanent seating shall be located beneath an awning, building overhang, pergola, or other permanent shading element, or within the projected fifteen-year canopy of a shade tree. The trunk of a qualifying shade tree shall be located no more than fifteen (15) feet from the nearest edge of the seating surface. Awnings, overhangs, and other structural shading elements shall extend over the entire seating surface when viewed in plan
7. A minimum of thirty percent (30%) and a maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the publicly accessible open space shall be open to the sky. The remaining area shall incorporate shade elements such as trellises, pergolas, canopies, or similar shade structures to provide relief from sun exposure and support comfortable use of the space. Shade elements may utilize materials and be designed in manners that allow filtered light to pass through while limiting direct sunlight and heat gain and shall be open on at least two sides.
8. A minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the publicly accessible open space shall be landscaped. Landscaping shall primarily consist of trees and other plantings that do not obstruct visibility, avoiding dense shrubs or vegetation where people or animals could hide.
9. Publicly accessible open space of eight hundred (800) sq. ft. or less shall require at least one (1) tree. For any open space area exceeding eight hundred (800) sq. ft., at least one additional tree shall be required for each additional increment or fraction thereof.
10. Hardscape surfaces that are impervious shall not exceed a gradient of 1:12.

2.2 VEHICULAR ACCESS & PARKING

Refer to Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 13 for off-street parking regulations.

2.2.1 VEHICULAR ACCESS HIERARCHY

1. Parking and service area access shall be provided in the following order, based on site characteristics:
   a. From a driveway shared with a property abutting the site, to the extent that the adjacent property owner(s) agree to such shared access.
   b. From the side/lesser street abutting the site.
   c. In the absence of a side street, from a curb cut/driveway along the primary street frontage.

2.3 BICYCLE CIRCULATION & PARKING

2.3.1 SHORT-TERM BICYCLE PARKING

1. Short-term bicycle parking shall consist of racks that support the bicycle frame at two points and allow for the bicycle frame and one wheel to be locked to the rack with a U-lock. The racks shall be permanently secured to the ground.
2. Short-term bicycle parking space shall be visible to pedestrians along a public right of way.
3. If more than twenty (20) short-term bicycle spaces are provided, at least fifty percent (50%) must be covered by a solid-roofed structure with a minimum height of ten (10) ft. and a one and a half (1.5) ft. overhang beyond the spaces.
4. Short-term bicycle parking shall be located within two hundred (200) ft. of a visitor entrance or be monitored by a surveillance camera that retains all footage for at least seventy-two (72) hours.

2.4 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS & CIRCULATION

2.4.1 PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

1. All on-site buildings, entries, facilities, and vehicular and bicycle parking areas shall be internally connected with a minimum five (5) ft. wide pedestrian pathway or pathway network that may include use of the public sidewalk. Portions of public sidewalks used are not required to be expanded to meet the minimum five (5) ft. width. The pedestrian pathway network shall connect to the public sidewalk along each street. The connection to the public sidewalk shall be the shortest distance between the primary entry and sidewalk, and shall not be more than one hundred and twenty five percent (125%) of the straight-line distance.
2. Pedestrian pathways within internal parking areas shall be separated from vehicular circulation by a physical barrier, such as a grade separation or a raised planting strip, of at least six (6) in. in height and at least six (6) ft. in width. A pedestrian pathway is exempt from this standard where it crosses a parking vehicular drive aisle. Additionally, accessible paths of travel inside parking structures are exempt from this requirement.
3. Pedestrian pathways shall be clearly paved to ensure visibility and consistency.
4. Pedestrian pathways shall be constructed of a smooth, firm, and stable surface that is slip-resistant and durable. Surfaces shall be designed to minimize tripping hazards and shall not include loose materials or irregular joints that could impede accessibility.
5. The use of asphalt or uncompacted decomposed granite for a pedestrian path is prohibited.
6. Pedestrian pathways shall maintain a minimum of four (4) ft. of clear zone from parking lots and the building edge, including patios and decks, except where the pathway provides direct access to these spaces.
7. For pedestrian paths exceeding two hundred (200) ft. in length, a minimum of two amenities for rest or shade, including trellises, benches, or trees, shall be provided. The required amenities may be of the same or different types. An additional two amenities shall be required for each subsequent two hundred (200) ft. of path length or fraction therof. All required amenities shall be located within five (5) ft. of the edge of the pedestrian path.
8. New development projects providing one hundred (100) or more parking spaces shall provide designated pedestrian corridors connecting parking areas to building entrances, public sidewalks, and/or publicly accessible open space. A minimum of one pedestrian corridor shall be provided for the first hundred (100) parking spaces, with one additional pedestrian corridor provided for every additional hundred (100) parking spaces. For new development projects with multiple buildings sharing a common parking area, the total number of parking spaces provided for all buildings within the center shall be used to determine whether this requirement applies.

   Where only one pedestrian corridor is required, the corridor shall have a minimum clear width of six (6) ft. Where more than two hundred (200) parking spaces are provided, pedestrian corridors shall have a minimum clear width of ten (10) ft.

   Pedestrian corridors shall be clearly distinguished from vehicle circulation areas through pavement markings, contrasting paving, raised walkways, landscaping, or similar treatments. Pedestrian corridors that cross parking rows or drive aisles shall be designed to improve pedestrian visibility and safety.

   Pedestrian corridors shall be adjacent to planting areas along at least one side of the corridor. Trees shall be provided within these planting areas at intervals not exceeding thirty (30) ft. on center. Planting areas shall include shrubs, groundcover, or other landscape plantings in addition to trees. Where a pedestrian pathway connects to a public sidewalk, within the first fifty (50) feet, trees shall be provided within the planting areas at intervals not exceeding twenty-five (25) ft. on center.

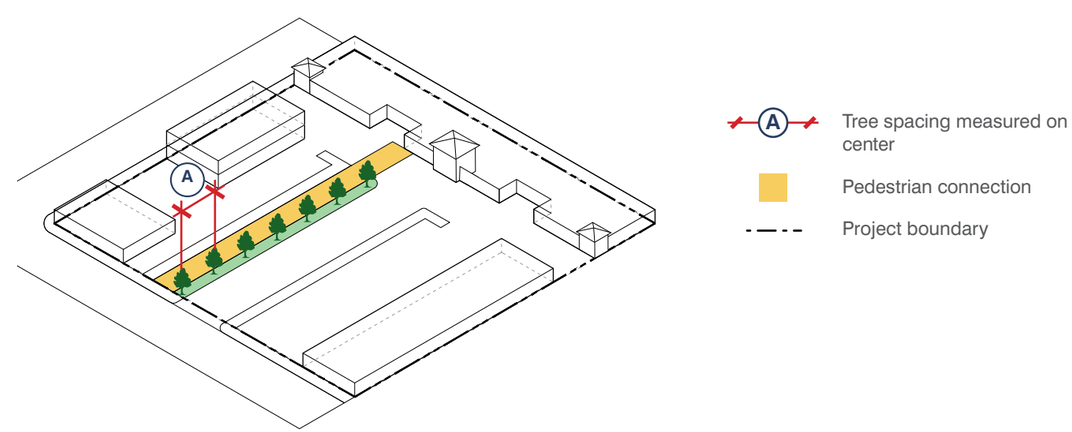


FIGURE 2.5: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AS AN ENTRY POINT TO THE COMMERCIAL CENTER

2.4.2 CART RETURN AREAS

For new development projects containing land uses that provide shopping carts for customer use, cart return areas shall be provided within parking areas to facilitate convenient cart return, reduce stray carts, and improve pedestrian and vehicular safety.

2.4.2.1 DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION

1. Cart return areas shall be located within parking rows and shall not obstruct vehicular drive aisles or primary pedestrian pathways.
2. Indoor cart return areas, or cart return areas located in alternate locations (e.g., outside the building entrance) may be requested as an exception to the Objective Design Standards, provided that the property owner enters into an agreement with the City to ensure carts left in parking areas are timely recovered and returned to the cart return areas.

2.4.2.2 CONFIGURATION AND MINIMUM PROVISION

1. Cart return areas shall be oriented parallel to parking stalls and integrated within parking modules.
2. A minimum of one cart return area occupying the equivalent of one parking space, configured as a dual access cart corral, shall be provided for every thirty (30) parking spaces.
3. Dual access cart corrals shall include a permanent divider (such as a metal railing or similar barrier) separating each bay to maintain independent cart storage areas. Each bay shall be designed to accommodate a single row of carts aligned in a straight orientation, such that carts are inserted end-to-end and not from the side.

2.4.2.3 DESIGN

1. Cart return areas shall include durable materials and be defined by either metal railings or similar structural elements, or by perimeter curbing, to provide a protective boundary for cart storage.
2. Signage on cart return areas requires approval as part of a sign program.

2.5 SITE LIGHTING

2.5.1 NUISANCE PREVENTION

1. All lights shall be directed, oriented, and shielded to prevent light trespass or glare onto adjacent properties. No spillover shall be permitted. The light level at property lines shall not exceed 0.3 ft. candles using ninety (90) degrees cutoff downlights.
2. All outdoor light fixtures should be fully shielded to prevent direct upward or outward light spill. This expands the measures related to sign illumination and open space sections (City of Laguna Woods n.d., §§13.12.040, 13.20.060)
3. All lighting shall be designed and installed with fixtures that direct light downward and away from surrounding buildings and properties, using full cut-off fixtures to minimize light trespass and glare.

2.5.2 FIXTURE TYPES

The maximum outdoor light intensity on a site shall not exceed an average value of five (5) ft.candles and all light sources shall have a correlated color temperature of two thousand and seven hundred Kelvin (2,700 K) or less.

2.5.3 MINIMUM LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS

2.5.3.1 PARKING AREAS

1. Lighting in parking areas shall be maintained with a minimum of one (1) ft. candle of illumination at the ground-level during hours of darkness, with a maximum of seven (7) ft. candles.
2. All lighting shall be controlled by a timeclock or photo-sensor system.
3. Illumination color temperature shall be within the range between three thousand to five thousand Kelvin (3,000K - 5,000K).

2.5.3.2 BUILDINGS

1. All exterior doors, including utility doors, shall be illuminated with a minimum of one (1) ft. candle of light during the hours of darkness.
2. All exterior lighting shall be ninety (90) degrees cutoff downlight with illumination not to exceed 0.3 ft. candles. Lighting for awnings shall be from fixtures located above the awnings.
3. Lighting for awnings shall be from fixtures located above the awnings. Backlighting of transparent or translucent awnings are not allowed.

2.5.3.3 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Areas used by pedestrians shall be illuminated whenever natural light levels fall below ten (10) ft. candles to ensure safety. This applies during nighttime or in interior spaces, where natural lighting may be insufficient to maintain visibility. Such areas include:

a. Surface parking lots and parking structures (entrances, elevators, and stairwells)

b. Sidewalks, walkways, and plazas

c. Building entrances (including rear and service entrances)

d. Waste disposal areas

e. Alleys

f. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)

2.5.4 DESIGN OF FIXTURES

2.5.4.1 BUILDING FIXTURES

Fixtures on buildings shall be attached only to walls or eaves, and the top of the fixture shall not exceed the height of the parapet, roof, or eave of the roof.

2.5.4.2 ACCENT LIGHTING

1. Architectural features may be illuminated by up-lighting, provided that the lamps are fully shielded to prevent light spill or upward light trespass, and the lighting intensity is appropriate to the scale of the building. Up-lighting should be directed to highlight features without causing glare or illuminating beyond the intended area.

2. Trees may not be illuminated by up-lighting.

2.5.5 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. Outdoor lighting shall utilize energy-efficient fixtures and lamps, such as metal halide, light-emitting diode (LED) or other lighting technology with a minimum luminous efficacy of one hundred (100) lumens per watt.

2. Outdoor lighting shall have a rated average bulb life of at least thirty thousand (30,000) hours, with at least seventy percent (70%) lumen maintenance level.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

BUILDING DESIGN

3

3.1 MASSING

3.2 BUILDING ORIENTATION

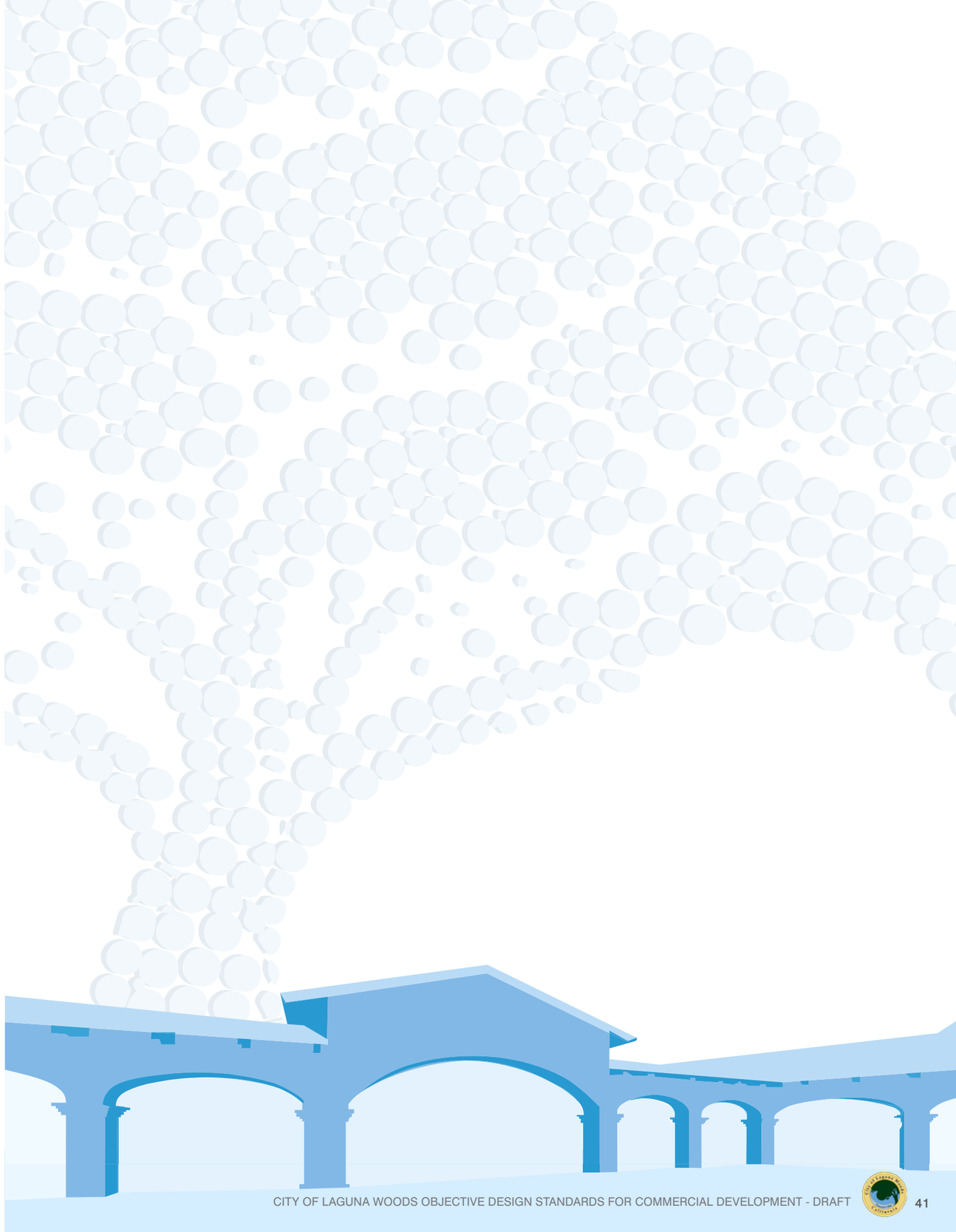
3.3 NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION

3.4 FACADE DESIGN

3.5 GROUND FLOOR USES

3.6 STREET FACING TRANSPARENCY

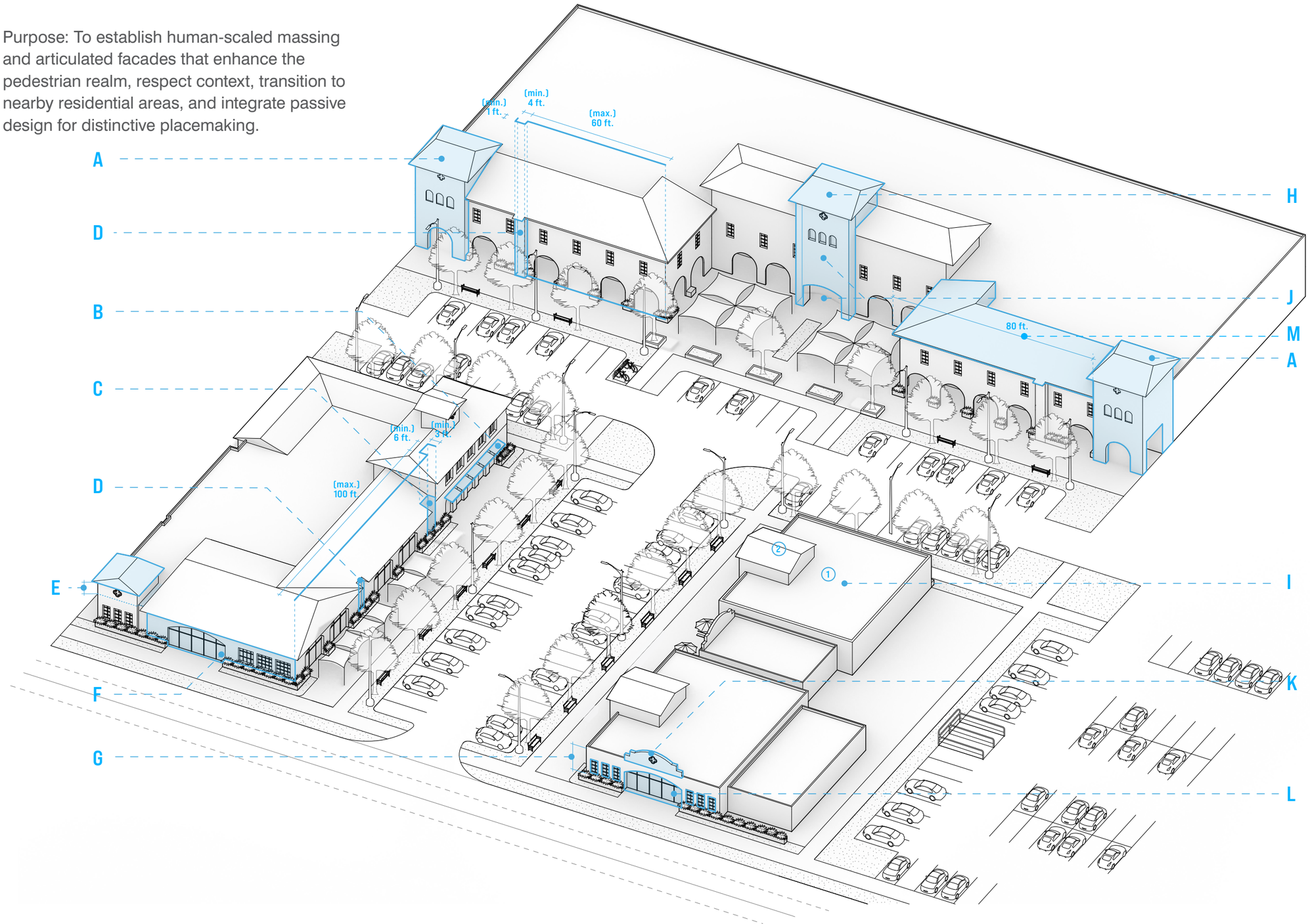
3.7 UTILITIES, SERVICE AREAS & BUILDING EQUIPMENT



CHAPTER 03

BUILDING DESIGN

Purpose: To establish human-scaled massing and articulated facades that enhance the pedestrian realm, respect context, transition to nearby residential areas, and integrate passive design for distinctive placemaking.



A - Ch. 3.1.4.6 (2)
Standard Vertical Elements shall have a minimum width of fifteen (15) ft. and shall extend vertically a minimum of six (6) ft. above the adjacent primary roofline, measured to the highest point of the element

B - Ch. 3.1.5 (2.a)
Awnings shall be provided over each storefront, located within the individual structural bays

C - Ch. 3.1.3.1 (2)
A major massing break shall be applied at least every 100 ft. in horizontal building length. The major break shall be a minimum of four (4) ft. deep and six (6) ft. wide, open to the sky, and extend the full height of the building

D - Ch. 3.1.3.1 (1)
A minor massing break shall be applied at least every sixty (60) ft. in horizontal building length. The minor break shall be a minimum of one (1) ft. deep and four (4) ft. wide, open to the sky, and extend the full height of the building

E - Ch. 3.1.4.2 (2)
Change in roof height of at least eighteen (18) in. measured from the highest point of each roof line

F - Ch. 3.5.1 (1)
Active Frontages are required for a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of each building facade facing an arterial, a local or collector public street, a publicly accessible private street, or a publicly accessible pathway with adjacent Primary Building Frontages.

G - Ch. 3.5.1.2
Active Frontage uses shall have a minimum floor-to-floor height of ten (10) ft. for ground floor office and fifteen (15) ft. for a commercial storefront

H - Ch. 3.1.4.6 (3)
Prominent Vertical Elements shall have a minimum width of thirty (30) ft. and shall extend vertically a minimum of ten (10) ft. above the adjacent primary roofline, measured to the highest point of the element

I - Ch. 3.1.4 (5)
Each building shall be limited to four (4) roof types.

1 Flat Roof with parapet 2 Hip Roof

J - Ch. 3.2.3 (1.a)
At all buildings, entrances shall be marked by a taller mass above, such as a tower, or within a volume that protrudes from the rest of the building surface which, if it meets the applicable dimensional requirements for a vertical element, may count toward compliance with both standards

K - Ch. 3.1.4.1 (4)
Flat roofs shall always be edged with parapet walls measuring at least 36 in. in height; and shall be treated with one (1) or more of the following conditions:

a. An architecturally profiled cornice and/ or expressed parapet cap shall be used to terminate the top of parapet wall.

b. Surface mounted cornices, continuous shade elements, or trellises shall be used to strengthen a parapet wall design.

c. Curved parapets shall be limited to one (1) per building.

L - Ch. 3.6.1
Each applicable facade shall provide no less than the minimum transparency listed by use. For a commercial storefront, the minimum transparency is fifty percent (50%) on the ground floor and forty percent (40%) on the upper levels. For other frontages, the minimum transparency is forty percent (40%) on the ground floor and thirty percent (30%) on the upper levels

M - Ch. 3.1.4.3 (3)
Public-facing facades shall incorporate roof form changes such that no continuous roofline segment exceeds eighty (80) linear ft. without a change in roof form.

3 BUILDING DESIGN

3.1 MASSING

3.1.1 BUILDING TYPE STANDARDS

Although each building type has a maximum prescribed number of stories, the maximum building height governed by the zoning district shall prevail. The name and definition of building types are as follows:

1. (S) Small
   a. Maximum length[1] of eighty (80) ft. on any side
   b. Typical building types may include uses such as cafe/coffee shop, drive-through, kiosk, small restaurant, bank branch, boutique retail, office, medical office, studio, car-wash, auto-related shop, and assembly.
2. (M) Medium
   a. Maximum length[1] of hundred (100) ft. on any side
   b. Typical building types may inlclude uses such as cafe/ coffee shop, drive-through, restaurant, food hall, bank branch, retail, office, medical office, studio, car-wash, auto-related shop, religious assembly, storage, brewery, fitness center, grocery, and hotel.
3. (L) Large
   a. Length exceeding hundred (100) ft.

   Typical building types may include uses such as café/coffee shop, drive-through, restaurant, food hall, bank branch, retail, big-box retail, home improvement stores, large specialty retail, regional or flagship markets, office, medical office, studio, car wash, auto-related uses or auto sales, religious assembly, storage, brewery, fitness center, grocery, and hotel. This may also include multi-tenant shopping centers consisting of multiple tenants within a single, connected building.

[1] Maximum length is measured of the longest facade of the building. The length of the facade is measured excluding a full break, which is a significant interruption or separation in the facade, such as a passageway, courtyard, or a change in building height of at least eighteen (18) in., that visually and structurally divides the building.

3.1.2 MASSING STRATEGIES

Buildings shall follow the minimum quantity of the massing strategies, per the tables below:

1. Modulation,
2. Roof form, or
3. Projections

MASSING STRATEGIES

BUILDING TYPE	MINIMUM REQUIRED STRATEGIES
(S) SMALL	1
(M) MEDIUM	2
(L) LARGE	3

STRATEGIES	BUILDING TYPE		
	(S) SMALL	(M) MEDIUM	(L) LARGE
MODULATION	■	■	■
ROOF FORM	●	●	■
PROJECTIONS	●	●	■
■ REQUIRED			
● OPTIONAL			

TABLE 3.1: MASSING STRATEGIES TABLE

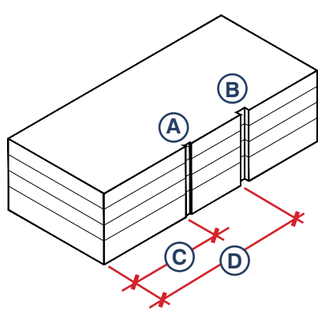
Note: Multi-level parking garages that do not face a public street, public/common open space, or a residential zoning district are exempt from this requirement.

3.1.3 BUILDING MODULATION

3.1.3.1 MASSING BREAKS

Minor and major massing breaks are required along elevations facing a public street, pedestrian-oriented space, publicly accessible outdoor space, or adjacent to a residential zone. Massing breaks shall divide long building elevations into smaller, visually distinct components; reduce perceived building scale and bulk; and create variations in depth, light, and shadow. Required breaks may be formed by insets, bays, notches, or projections. Changes in materials, colors, or architectural detailing may be coordinated with the breaks to further distinguish building components.

1. **Minor Massing Break:** A minor massing break shall be applied at least every sixty (60) ft. in horizontal building length. The minor break shall be a minimum of one (1) ft. deep and four (4) ft. wide, open to the sky, and extend the full height of the building.
2. **Major Massing Break:** A major massing break shall be applied at least every hundred (100) ft. in horizontal building length. The major break shall be a minimum of four (4) ft. deep and six (6) ft. wide, open to the sky, and extend the full height of the building.



A Minor massing break (min. 1 ft. deep x 4 ft. wide)

B Major massing break (min. 4 ft. deep x 6 ft. wide)

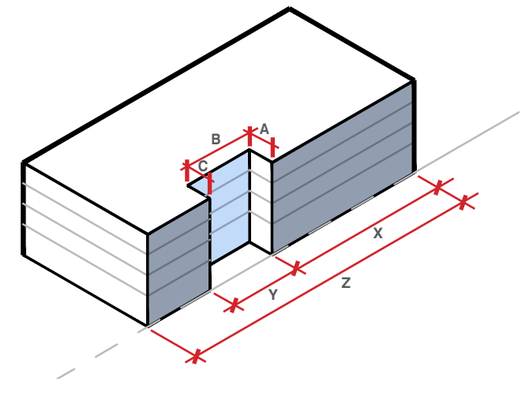
C 60 ft. max.

D 100 ft. max.

FIGURE 3.1: BUILDING MODULATION

3.1.3.2 MAXIMUM CONTINUOUS UNINTERRUPTED BUILDING LENGTH

Buildings over four hundred (400) ft. in length, in addition to applying the minimum required massing breaks, shall apply a horizontal plane change (open to the sky) of at least fifty (50) ft. in depth after every four hundred (400) ft. in length. For this plane change, the total linear horizontal length (A+B+C) shall not be less than two hundred (200) ft., shown in Figure 3.2.



X = MAXIMUM 400 ft. CONTINUOUS UNINTERRUPTED BUILDING LENGTH

Y = HORIZONTAL PLANE CHANGE

Z = TOTAL BUILDING LENGTH

FIGURE 3.2: MAXIMUM CONTINUOUS UNINTERRUPTED BUILDING LENGTH

3.1.3.3 EXEMPTIONS

Building elevations that are less than sixty (60) ft. in length are not required to have a change in plane or a massing break incorporated into their design.

3.1.4 ROOF FORM

Variation in roof forms is required for elevations that face a public street, public easement, publicly accessible open space, or residential zone.

3.1.4.1 ROOFS

1. A minimum of one roof per building shall utilize either a hip or gable roof type.
2. Roofs shall be low-pitched with a slope between 4:12 to 6:12, with broad, overhanging eaves ranging from eighteen (18) to 24 in.
3. Sloped roofs shall utilize clay tile, concrete-tile, or tile-profiled metal roofing. Common shapes include both Spanish (S-shaped) and Mission (half cylindrical/ barrel tile) types.
4. Flat roofs shall always be edged with parapet walls measuring at least 36 in. in height; and shall be treated with one (1) or more of the following conditions:
   a. An architecturally profiled cornice and/or expressed parapet cap shall be used to terminate the top of parapet wall.
   b. Surface mounted cornices, continuous shade elements, or trellises shall be used to strengthen a parapet wall design.
   c. Curved parapets shall be limited to one (1) per building.
5. Interior sides of parapets shall be finished in the same color and materials as the exterior sides thereof.

3.1.4.2 METHODS TO CREATE ROOF FORM VARIATION

A change in roof form shall be implemented using one (1) or a combination of the following methods:

1. A change in roof type, as defined in 3.1.4.4. A minimum of one (1) roof in each building shall utilize either a hip roof type or a gable roof type. Each building is limited to a maximum of four (4) roof types.
2. Change in roof height of at least eighteen (18) in. measured from the highest point of each roof line.
3. Stacked projecting balconies with a minimum depth of five (5) ft. and a minimum length of eight (8) ft., when applied to at least fifty percent (50%) of the upper floors. The full balcony length shall project a minimum of eighteen (18) in. from the primary building facade.
4. Rooftop terrace with a minimum floor area of eighty (80) sq. ft.
5. A change in roof pitch or direction.

3.1.4.3 CALCULATING ROOF FORMS

Roof form changes shall be provided so that no continuous roofline segment exceeds eighty (80) linear ft. without a change in roof form.

1. Each distinct roof form segment shall not exceed eighty (80) linear ft. in length.
2. A new eighty (80) ft. maximum segment shall begin at each roof form change, regardless of the length of the preceding segment.
3. Roof form changes may occur at any interval less than eighty (80) ft.; however, no single roof form shall extend beyond eighty (80) ft. without a change.

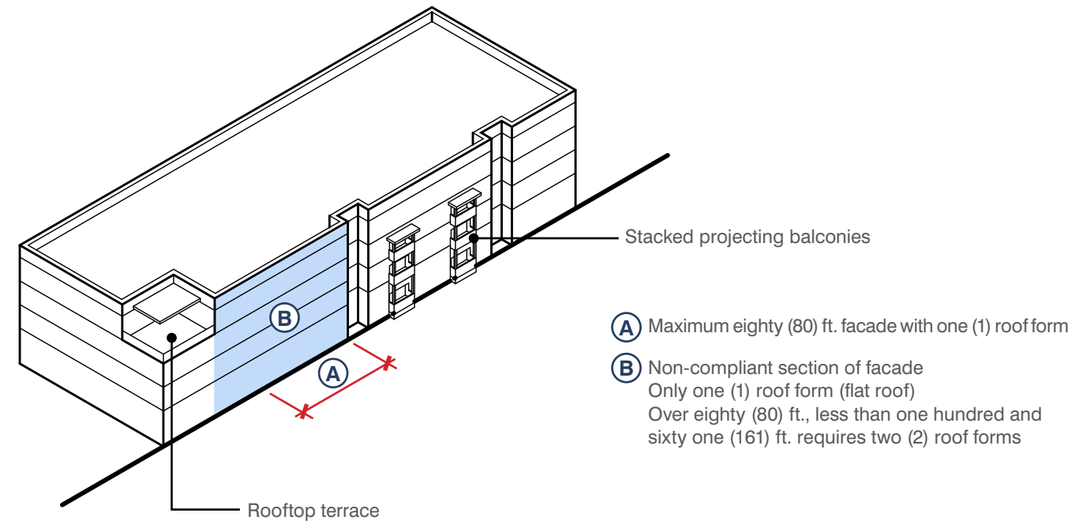


FIGURE 3.3: BUILDING FACADE WITH NON-COMPLIANT SECTION

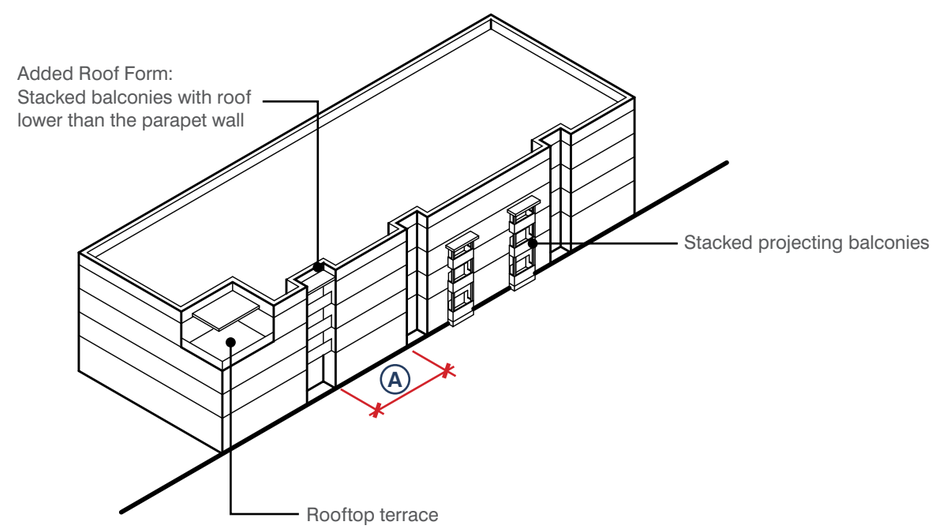


FIGURE 3.4: COMPLIANT BUILDING FACADE

3.1.4.4 CALCULATING COMBINED ROOF TYPES

Combined roof forms occur when two or more roofs intersect.

1. Each distinct change in roof form shall be counted individually, regardless of whether it is the same or a different roof type.
2. Intersecting roofs may be organized in a hierarchy, with a primary roof and additional roof types (see Figure 3.5). Each additional intersecting roof type (e.g., dormers or similar features) shall be counted as a separate roof form in addition to the primary roof (see Figure 3.6).
3. Secondary roof forms located above projecting facade modulations shall each be counted as separate roof forms where they intersect with the primary roof, even when the secondary roof forms utilize the same roof type and are identical in design (see Figure 3.7).
4. Within combined or intersecting roof forms, repeated roof types (e.g., a series of gables or hips, or stepped flat roofs) shall be counted individually for each occurrence (see Figures 3.8 and 3.9).

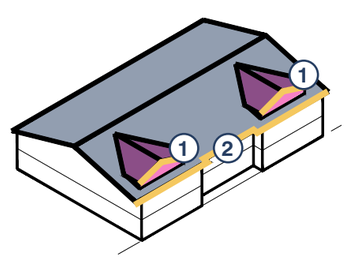


FIGURE 3.5: HIERARCHICAL ROOF FORMS

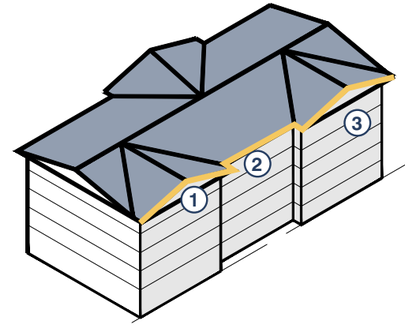


FIGURE 3.6: INTERSECTING ROOF TYPES

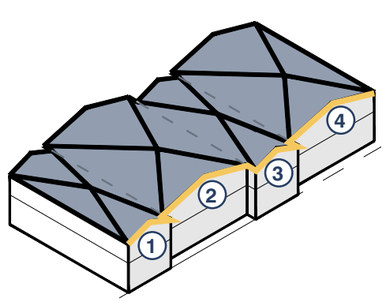


FIGURE 3.7: REPEATED ROOF TYPES: GABLES/ HIP

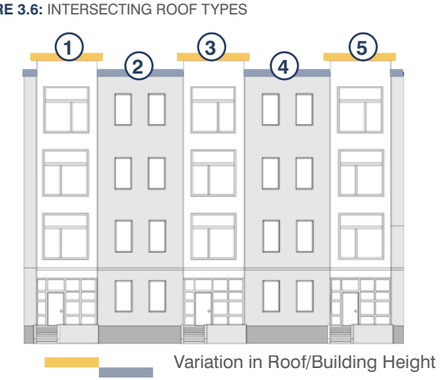


FIGURE 3.8: REPEATED ROOF TYPES: FLAT ROOF "SAWTOOTH"

3.1.4.5 ACCEPTABLE ROOF TYPES

Roof type is defined as a geometric plane or set of planes which form the top enclosure of a volumetric area below it/them. Each building shall be limited to four (4) roof types. Common types of roof are gabled, hipped, shed, and flat among others. Acceptable roof types are listed in Figure 3.9.

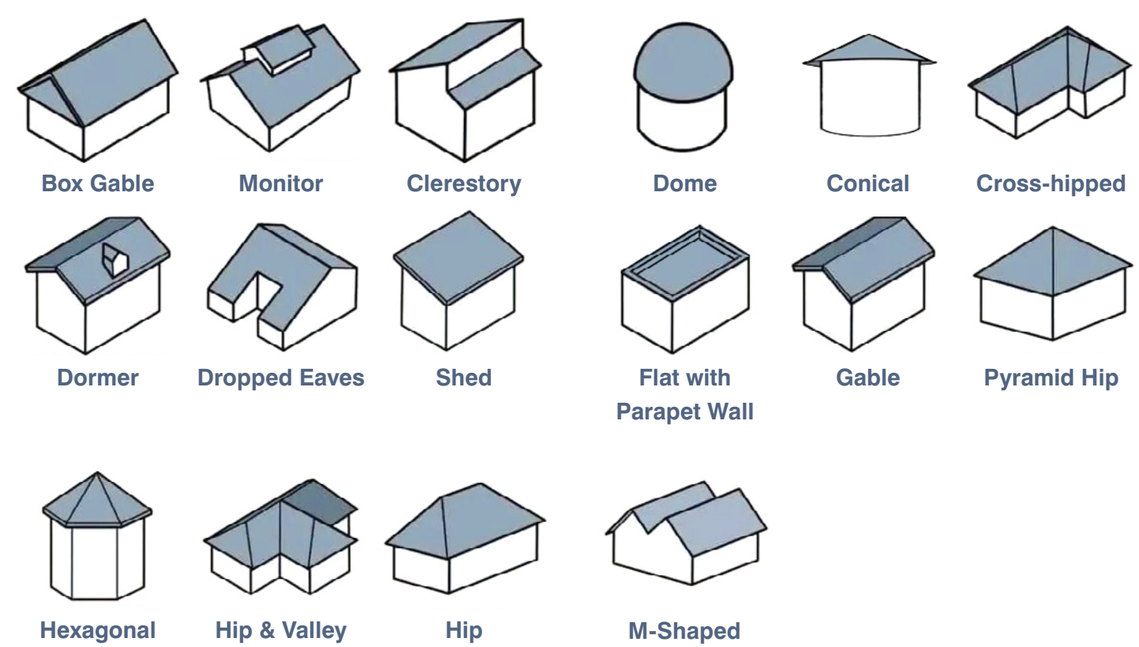


FIGURE 3.9: BUILDING ROOF FORM OPTIONS

3.1.4.6 VERTICAL ELEMENTS

Buildings that are two stories or less, shall incorporate vertical roof variation elements (Vertical Elements) that extend above the primary roofline. Vertical Elements may contain occupiable space or may be purely architectural. Vertical Elements shall include a change in plane from the adjacent wall facade with a minimum depth or projection of three (3) ft. Vertical Elements shall also incorporate a distinct facade treatment that differs from the adjacent building facade, consistent with the requirements of Section 3.4.1.

General Requirements

1. All Vertical Elements shall be located at prominent locations, including primary entrances, corners, building ends, changes in building direction or massing breaks.
2. Standard Vertical Element

   Standard Vertical Elements shall have aw minimum width of fifteen (15) ft. and shall extend vertically a minimum of six (6) ft. above the adjacent primary roofline, measured to the highest point of the element.
3. Prominent Vertical Elements

   Prominent Vertical Elements shall have a minimum width of thirty (30) ft. and shall extend vertically a minimum of ten (10) ft. above the adjacent primary roofline, measured to the highest point of the element.

Required Number and Type by Building Length

1. Medium Buildings (per Section 3.1.1) (see figure 3.10)
   a. A minimum of two (2) Vertical Elements with a minimum spacing of fifteen (15) ft., shall be provided per public facing facade, including:
      i. One (1) Standard Vertical Element
      ii. One (1) Prominent Vertical Element
2. Large Buildings (per Section 3.1.1) (see figure 3.11)
   a. A minimum of two (2) Vertical Elements with a minimum spacing of thirty (30) ft. per public facing facade, shall be provided, including:
      i. One (1) Standard Vertical Element
      ii. One (1) Prominent Vertical Element
   b. For buildings greater than one hundred (100) ft. and up to four hundred (400) ft. in length, one (1) additional Standard Vertical Element shall be provided for each additional one hundred (100) ft. of building length, or fraction thereof, beyond the first one hundred (100) ft.
   c. For buildings greater than four hundred (400) ft. and up to one thousand (1000) ft. in length, one (1) additional Prominent Vertical Element shall be provided, together with one (1) additional Standard Vertical Element for each additional one hundred (100) ft. of building length or fraction thereof, beyond the first one hundred (100) ft.
   d. For buildings greater than one thousand (1,000) ft. in length, an additional three (3) Prominent Vertical Elements shall be provided, together with one (1) additional Standard Vertical Element for each additional one hundred (100) ft. of building length or fraction thereof, beyond the first one hundred (100) ft. of building length.

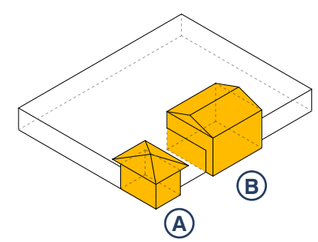


FIGURE 3.10: MEDIUM BUILDINGS

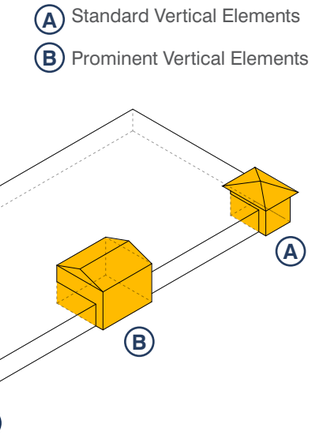


FIGURE 3.11: LARGE BUILDINGS

3.1.4.7 NOTES

Changes in roof form shall not exceed the maximum building heights set forth in Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 13.

3.1.5 BUILDING PROJECTIONS

Buildings shall use one (1) or more of the following projections:

1. Balconies and Decks
   a. Balconies and Decks shall not project more than six (6) ft. from the facade on elevations directly fronting a primary street or residential zoning district.
   b. The distance between supporting columns, piers, or posts on trellises or balconies shall not exceed their height.
2. Awnings or Canopies
   a. Awnings shall be provided over each storefront, located within the individual structural bays.
   b. Shall not project more than six (6) ft. from the facade.
   c. The height of all awnings above a sidewalk shall be consistent, with a minimum clearance of eight (8) ft. provided between the bottom of the valance and the sidewalk. Valances shall not exceed eighteen (18) in. in height.

3.2 BUILDING ORIENTATION

3.2.1 BUILDING SITING AND ORIENTATION

1. Building frontages shall not orient to parking lots at the sides or rears of buildings.
2. Building facades along the primary street frontage shall contain elevations activated by doors and windows that look into the street and shall contain the most articulated elevations of the building.

3.2.2 CORNER BUILDINGS

For buildings located at intersections, they shall be designed to define and give prominence to the corner on which they are sited, by acknowledging both street facades with facade articulation and detail. At least one (1) of the following techniques shall be used.

1. Creation of a landmark roof form, such as dome, conical, hexagonal or pyramidical roof.
2. Creation of a corner tower.
3. A storefront, building protrusion, bay, porch element or arcade that wraps around the corner.
4. A corner entrance that protrudes or is cut-away from the corner.
5. A change in roofline; such as a gabled end to mark the corner.

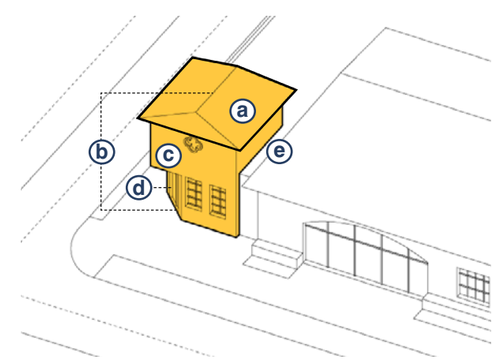


FIGURE 3.12: CORNER TOWER

3.2.3 PRIMARY ENTRANCES

1. Primary entrances to buildings or commercial units shall be designed to be consistent with the overall architecture of the building. At all buildings, entrances shall be located along the primary street facade and shall be clear, easily identifiable and shall use one (1) or more of the following treatments.

a. Marked by a taller mass above, such as a tower, or within a volume that protrudes from the rest of the building surface which, if it meets the applicable dimensional requirements for a vertical element, may count toward compliance with both standards

b. Indicated by a projection from the building facade, and covered by means of a building overhang, awning or canopy that projects from the building.

c. Indicated by a recessed entry. Treatments shall include either special paving materials such as ceramic tile; ornamental ceiling treatments, such as coffering; decorative light fixtures; and attractive decorative pulls, escutcheons, hinges, and other hardware.

d. Denoted by a single arch or series of arches to indicate entry. Arcaded entry porches are also recommended.

e. Framed by special architectural elements, such as columns, archways, and overhanging roofs.

f. Emphasized by a small roof overhang over the entrance, change in roofline or a major break in the surface of the subject wall.

3.3 NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION

3.3.1 TRANSITION PLANE

1. Buildings shall not intercept a forty five (45)-degree neighborhood transition plane inclined inward from the underlying setback, starting at a height thirty five (35) ft. above grade.

2. Balconies and decks shall not extend into an underlying setback.

3. The area of roof decks, including any deck on roof area falling under the neighborhood transition plane, shall be set back at least three (3) ft. from the building edge and any railings, shade structures, or accessory structures shall not intersect the required neighborhood transition plane.

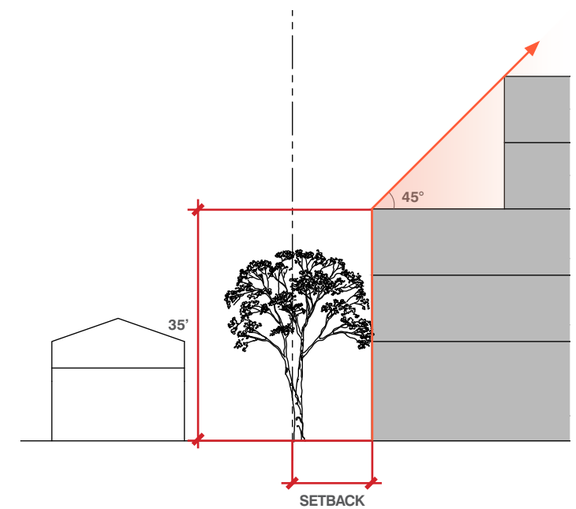


FIGURE 3.13: TRANSITION PLANE

3.4 FACADE DESIGN

3.4.1 FACADE TREATMENT

1. Each building facade between one hundred (100) and one hundred fifty (150) ft in length shall include a minimum of two (2) distinct facade treatments. For facades exceeding 300 ft, three (3) distinct facade treatments shall be required. A building facade shall not have more than three (3) distinct facade treatments, regardless of the length of the facade.
2. Each distinct facade treatment shall have a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the overall facade area. Additional treatments beyond the maximum are permitted and may be less than twenty percent (20%) of the overall facade area.
3. A change in stucco color may be considered a distinct facade treatment, allowing for up to two (2) variations of facade treatment.

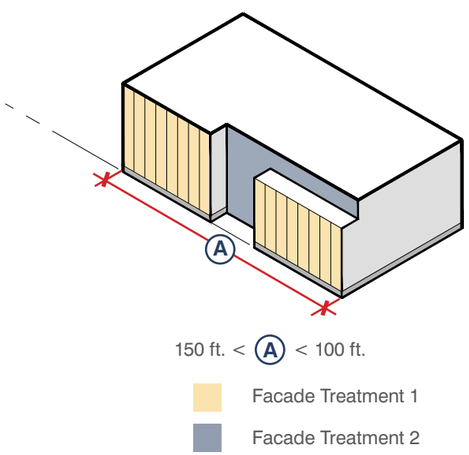


FIGURE 3.14: FACADE TREATMENT DIAGRAM 1

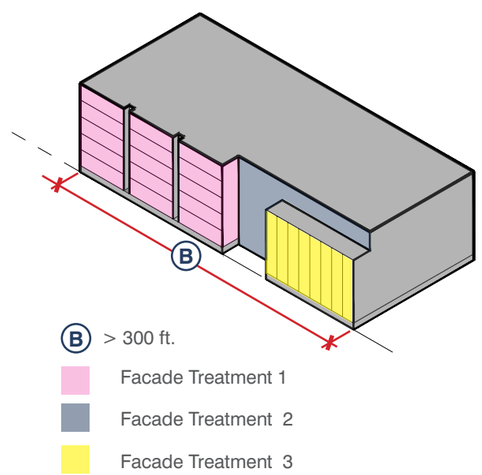


FIGURE 3.15: FACADE TREATMENT DIAGRAM 2

3.4.2 BASE/MIDDLE/TOP

Buildings four (4) stories or taller with a building length on any side greater than fifty (50) ft. measured as the horizontal distance of the building facade, which includes minor and major modulations, shall be designed as specified in this subsection to differentiate a defined base or ground floor, a middle or body, and a top, cornice, or parapet cap. This standard applies to all exterior facades of the building.

1. A building's base shall be defined or differentiated from the middle/body by using one (1) of the following techniques:
   a. Having a distinct facade composition between the base floor(s) and middle/body floors
   b. Having a datum line or cornice between the base floor(s) and middle/body floors that has a minimum height of four (4) in. and a minimum depth of four (4) in.
   c. The ground floor height (measured floor to floor) that is a minimum two (2) ft. greater than middle/body floor-to-floor heights.

FIGURE 3.15: DATUM LINE DIAGRAM 1

2. A building's top floor(s) shall be defined or differentiated from the middle/body by using two (2) or more of the following techniques:

   a. Have a distinct facade composition from the middle/body floors to the top floor(s)

   b. Datum line or cornice between the middle and top floor(s) that include a minimum height of four (4) in. and a minimum depth of four (4) in.

   c. Distinct roof form or roof line. Apply one (1) of the following:

      i. Cornice or parapet cap that includes a change in material from the facade and a minimum height of eight (8) in. and a minimum depth of four (4) in.

      ii. A variation in roof or building height through building modulation: (examples: Bays that extend above primary facade height)

      iii. The use of at least two roof types

3.4.3 FACADE MATERIALS

1. Building Materials

   a. Stucco, cement plaster or stucco-like finishes are acceptable finishes. Attention should be paid to detail and trim elements for a high quality installation. The pattern of joints shall match the overall facade composition, and sealant colors shall be consistent with surface and other building colors. Stucco surfaces shall have a-half (1/2) to three quarters (3/4) an inch bull-nosed corners.

2. Windows and Doors

   a. Window frames shall not be set flush with walls. Glass shall be inset a minimum of two (2) in. from the exterior wall and/or frame surface.

   b. At least sixty percent (60%) of all windows and doors shall be recessed a minimum of four (4) in. to emphasize wall mass, depth, and shadow.

   c. At deeply inset windows (greater than four (4) in. from the exterior wall); the framing may be simple and relatively unarticulated. At shallower insets (two to four (2-4) in. from the exterior wall), projecting sills, molded surrounds, lintels and/or trim shall be used to frame openings.

   d. Where window mullions are provided, they shall be arranged in simple, regular divisions to create a balanced and orderly window pattern.

   e. Sills and surrounds shall be proportioned to relate to the window size. For windows less than forty eight (48) in. in width, surrounds shall not exceed six (6) in. width. For windows greater than forty eight (48) in. in width, surrounds shall not exceed eight (8) in. in width.

   f. Aluminum sliding windows shall be designed to have substantial framing members, at a minimum width of two (2) in.

   g. Clear glass is preferred. Reflective glazing shall not be used. Non-reflective films, coatings, low emissivity glass, and external and internal shade devices shall be used for heat and glare control.

   h. Deeply tinted glass or applied tinted films shall not be used. If tinted glazing is used, light tints and gray hues are acceptable.

   i. A minimum of one (1) arched door, window, or opening shall be provided along a public-facing facade.

3. Parapet walls shall be terminated with a substantial, integrated cap that conveys the appearance of solid wall construction. Thin, flush-applied caps or edge conditions that appear lightweight or prone to warping are prohibited. Acceptable cap treatments shall consist of stucco, cast stone, concrete, or clay tile, formed with sufficient thickness and a shaped or sloped profile to provide a durable, high-quality finish.

3.5 GROUND FLOOR USES

3.5.1 ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Active frontages are building frontages occupied by active uses that create visual engagement between the ground floor and an adjacent street, public space, or other public-facing area and generate pedestrian activity throughout extended periods of the day. Active uses may include shops, cafes, restaurants, and other social spaces as well as accessory spaces such as lobbies, lounges and shared amenity areas.

1. Active Frontages are required for a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of each building facade facing an arterial, a local or collector public street, a publicly accessible private street, or a publicly accessible pathway with adjacent Primary Building Frontages.
2. On corner parcels, the commercial uses shall turn (wrap around) the corner for a distance of at least fourty (40) ft. The termination of use shall occur at an architectural break in the building.

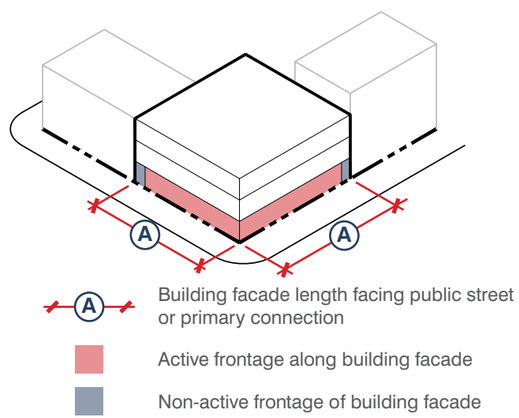


FIGURE 3.16: ACTIVE FRONTAGE DIAGRAM

3. To qualify as Active Frontage, uses shall maintain a minimum depth of 30 ft, while corner parcels shall provide a minimum depth of 40 ft along all frontages.

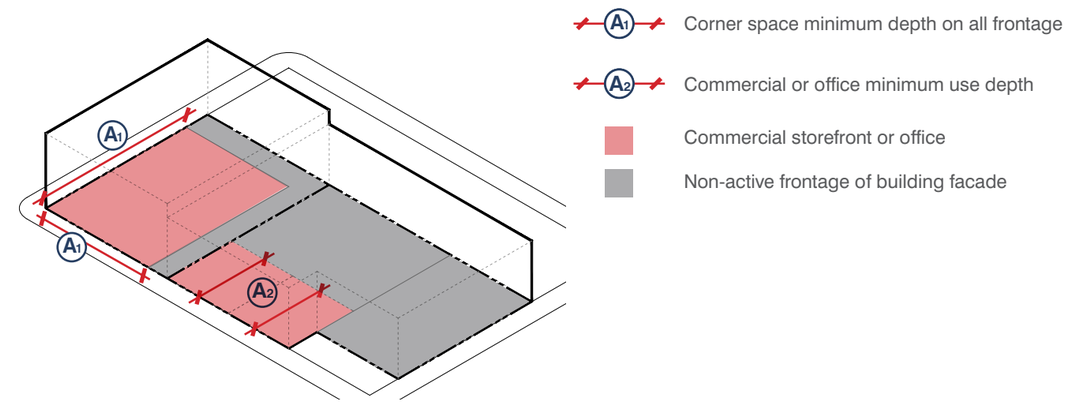


FIGURE 3.17: ACTIVE FRONTAGE MIN. DEPTH DIAGRAM

3.5.1.1 FINISHED FLOOR HEIGHTS OF ACTIVE USES

Active frontage spaces shall have a finished floor height within the following ranges (measured from grade at the back edge of the adjacent sidewalk). All other uses see Standard 3.5.1.2 Variable Finished Floor Heights.

ACTIVE USES FINISHED FLOOR HEIGHT

	MIN. HEIGHT (FT.)	MAX. HEIGHT (FT.)
PRIMARY BUILDING ENTRIES	0 ft.	3 ft.
COMMERCIAL STOREFRONT; OFFICE	0 ft.	1 ft.
BUILDINGS WITH CROSS SLOPE	At no point shall the finished floor height be greater than 2 ft. above or below grade, with a minimum cross slope of 1%	

TABLE 3.2: ACTIVE USES FINISHED FLOOR HEIGHT STANDARD

3.5.1.2 FLOOR TO FLOOR HEIGHTS OF ACTIVE USES

Active Frontage uses shall have a minimum floor-to-floor height by use type as follows:

ACTIVE USES FLOOR TO FLOOR HEIGHT

	MIN. HEIGHT (FT.)
COMMERCIAL STOREFRONT	15 ft.
GROUND FLOOR OFFICE	10 ft.

TABLE 3.3: ACTIVE USES FLOOR TO FLOOR HEIGHT STANDARD

3.6 STREET FACING TRANSPARENCY

3.6.1 TRANSPARENCY

Placement and orientation of doorways, windows, and landscape elements shall create strong, direct relationships with the street. Street-facing facades of all buildings shall incorporate windows and openings providing light to adjacent spaces, rooms and uses. Transparency is measured as a percentage, calculated as the sum of single story transparent area divided by the total single story facade area.

Each applicable facade shall provide no less than the minimum transparency listed by use.

REQUIRED TRANSPARENCY BY FRONTAGE TYPE

FRONTAGE TYPE	TRANSPARENCY (MIN.)	
	GROUND LEVEL	UPPER LEVELS
COMMERCIAL STOREFRONT	50%	40%
OTHER FRONTAGES	40%	30%

TABLE 3.4: REQUIRED TRANSPARENCY BY FRONTAGE TYPE

3.6.1.1 STREET FRONTAGE TRANSPARENCY

Elevations that face a public street, public easement, or publicly accessible open space shall be comprised of windows and/or doorlites with clear unobscured glass as measured from two and a half (2.5) ft. to eight (8) ft. above finished grade where no minimum blank walls occur.

Where facades include windows, glazing shall be provided between two and a half (2.5) ft. and eight (8) ft. above finished grade. Glazing may extend beyond this range, provided it is also present within this required zone.

Within this area, no more than twenty five percent (25%) can be covered by signage, displays, shelving, opaque film or interior partitions. Window coverings, including blinds, curtains, shades, or similar treatments, shall remain operable and shall not be permanently fixed, adhered, or installed in a manner that prevents the window from meeting the required transparency standard.

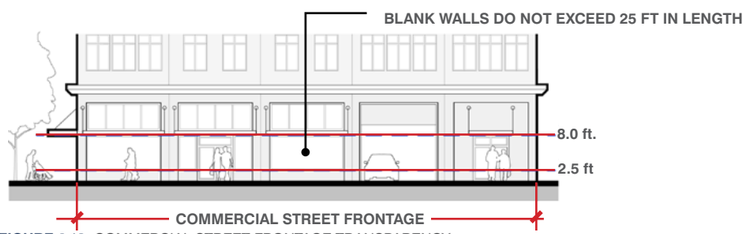


FIGURE 3.18: COMMERCIAL STREET FRONTAGE TRANSPARENCY

3.6.1.2 BLANK WALLS

1. Building facades without the use of windows or doors shall not span a continuous horizontal length greater than twenty five (25) ft. across any story.
2. A break in a blank building wall shall be provided by any of the following:
   a. Doors, windows, or other building openings.
   b. Varying wall planes, where the wall projects or is recessed at least six (6) in. Where the projection or recess also meets the requirements for minor or major massing modulation, it may be counted toward both requirements.
3. The following do not qualify as a break in blank wall:
   a. Variation in exterior building wall color.
   b. Vegetation or landscaping not attached to a building wall.
   c. Commercial or directional signs.
   d. Mechanical appurtenances such as water heaters, vents, or utility meters.

3.7 UTILITIES, SERVICE AREAS & BUILDING EQUIPMENT

3.7.1 SERVICE AREAS, STORAGE, UTILITIES, AND EQUIPMENT

3.7.1.1 UTILITIES

For new development projects, utilities shall be placed in underground or subsurface conduits unless technically infeasible or prohibited by the City or the respective utility provider.

3.7.1.2 LOCATION OF SERVICE AREAS, STORAGE, UTILITIES, AND EQUIPMENT

1. All above-ground utilities and equipment (e.g., electric and gas meters, fire sprinkler valves, backflow prevention devices, etc.), service areas (e .g. garbage collection areas, loading docks, etc.), and storage areas shall be integrated into the building and landscape design, and located to minimize impact on the pedestrian experience and neighboring properties, by following the standards below:
   a. Utilities, equipment, service areas, storage, and non-passenger loading zones shall be located inside buildings or away from the primary building frontage, preferably along alleys, parking areas, or at the rear or side of the building, if not part of the primary frontage, except where such placement would be prohibited by the respective utility provider, conflict with applicable building code requirements, including required access, clearances, and visibility for emergency response and maintenance.
   b. Utilities and equipment, service, storage, and non-passenger loading areas shall be consolidated within a single area. They shall not be located within minimum setback areas, and/or within twenty five (25) ft. of a street corner, unless required by the respective utility provider or applicable building code requirements.
   c. Backflow preventers shall be located within landscaped areas and covered with freeze protection, in a green color (e.g., Hex #013220). Where cages or other enclosures are installed to house or protect backflow preventers, they shall be in a green color.

3.7.1.3 SERVICE, STORAGE, UTILITY, AND EQUIPMENT SCREENING

1. All service and storage areas, utilities, and equipment not housed inside buildings shall meet the following screening standards:
   a. Screening shall consist of solid enclosures, landscaping, and/or architectural elements that are consistent with the building design.
   b. Screening shall follow the same design, colors, and materials as the building walls to maintain visual consistency and complement the overall architectural style.

c. When landscaping is used as screening, it must be a minimum of thirty six (36) in. wide and include dense, evergreen shrubs or small trees that reach a minimum height of four (4) ft. within four (4) years of planting. A minimum spread of two (2) ft. shall be required at time of planting.

3.7.1.4 LOCATION AND SCREENING OF ROOFTOP EQUIPMENT

1. Rooftop elements including roof access, mechanical equipment, and other features needed for the function of the building, shall be located to minimize visual impact by meeting the following requirements. Mechanical equipment less than two (2) ft. in height, solar panels, or wind generators are exempt from these requirements.

   a. Roof-mounted equipment and screening of roof-mounted equipment shall be stepped back from top of parapet a minimum of ten (10) ft. from the parapet or roof edge.

   b. Roof-mounted equipment that extends higher than the parapet wall shall be fully screened by an architectural screen element similar in design and color to the underlying building. Wood lattice is not permitted as a screening device. A pre-manufactured screening device that aligns with the building's architecture may be used as an alternative.

   c. Screening must effectively block views of rooftop equipment from a point six (6) ft. above ground level at the property line, the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street, or from any adjacent property and public rights-of-way.

   d. The location, spacing, materials, and colors of down-spouts, gutters, scuppers, and other drainage components shall be incorporated into the architectural composition of the facade and roof. Downspouts shall be concealed within walls or located to harmonize with window spacing and facade composition.

3.7.2 WASTE ENCLOSURES AND RECEPTACLES

Waste enclosures and receptacles shall be designed and constructed as required by the Laguna Woods Municipal Code.

3.7.3 SECURITY BARRIERS

1. Any security barriers installed on the windows or the doors of the premises shall be installed only on the interior of the building and in compliance with the California Building Standards Code and Laguna Woods Municipal Code.

2. Security barriers shall meet the following criteria:

   a. Only open grill design security systems located on the inside of the building shall be permitted on elevations visible from the street.

   b. Open grill design security systems shall be primarily transparent with not less than seventy five percent (75%) visibility from the street.

   c. Solid roll-down security doors on elevations visible from a public or private street are prohibited unless part of a vehicle loading bay.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

4

4.1 OVERVIEW AND APPLICATIONS

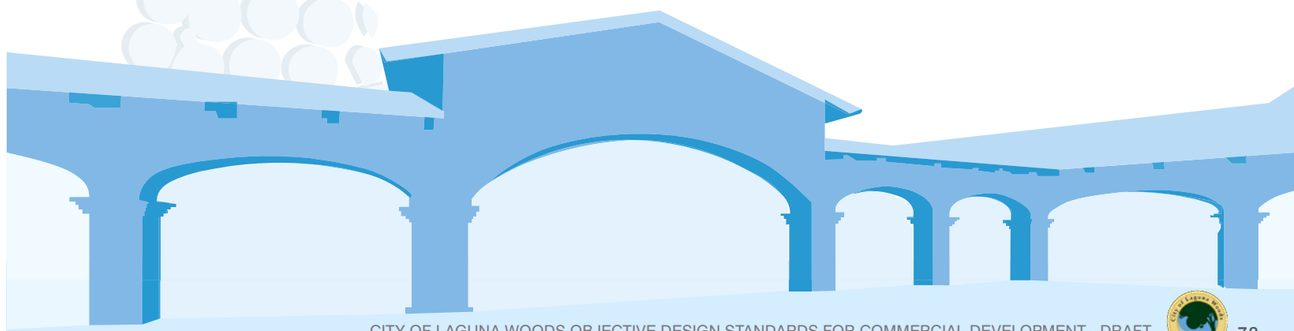
4.2 LAGUNA WOODS REVIVAL

4.3 ROOFS

4.4 WALLS AND WINDOWS

4.5 MATERIALS AND COLORS

4.6 DECORATIVE ACCENTS AND DETAILS



4 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

4.1 OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION

4.1.1 EXISTING ARCHITECTURAL STYLES MAP

The following map identifies seven (7) existing architectural styles that contribute to the City's character. Future architectural designs shall merge the preferred Mission Revival and Spanish Revival styles into a cohesive "Laguna Woods Revival" identity.

LEGEND

- SPANISH REVIVAL
- MISSION REVIVAL
- SPANISH MODERNIST
- MEDITERRANEAN
- MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL
- MOUNTAIN CONTEMPORARY
- CONTEMPORARY

4.1.2 APPLICATION

The architectural style provides a clearly defined framework of required and optional architectural features in the categories of roof, walls and windows, materials and colors, and decorative accents and details, providing flexibility for creative expression while ensuring consistency with the main characteristics of the architectural style. The Objective Design Standards also identifies prohibited elements that shall be avoided to maintain the integrity and intended character of the architectural style.

1 REVIEW THE STYLE DESCTIPTION

2 COMPLY WITH ALL FOUR (4) CATEGORIES

The architectural style is divided into four categories: Roof, Walls and Windows, Materials and Colors, and Decorative Accents and Details. All categories must be met to comply with the Architectural Style section of the Objective Design Standards.

1. ROOF
2. WALLS AND WINDOWS
3. MATERIALS AND COLORS
4. DECORATIVE ACCENTS AND DETAILS

3 PROVIDE REQUIRED & OPTIONAL FEATURES

Each category includes three (3) components: required, optional, and prohibited. All required features shall be fulfilled, while the optional component provides a selection of features from which a minimum number must be chosen. Prohibited features identify elements that shall be avoided to maintain the intended architectural character.

- REQUIRED: MEET ALL FEATURES
- OPTIONAL: SELECT MINIMUM NUMBER OF FEATURES
- PROHIBITED: REFRAIN FROM USING

4.2 LAGUNA WOODS REVIVAL

4.2.1 STYLE DESCRIPTION

The proposed architectural style is a blended expression rooted in both Mission Revival and Spanish Revival traditions, adapted to create a cohesive and locally responsive identity for Laguna Woods. Mission Revival architecture draws inspiration from the early California missions established during the Spanish colonial period, emphasizing simplicity, thick stucco walls, smooth plaster surfaces, and iconic features such as shaped parapets and arcades. Spanish Revival, influenced by the architecture of Spain and Latin America, builds upon this foundation with more ornamental detailing, including decorative tilework, decorative metal elements, and articulated facades.

Laguna Woods Revival combines the restrained massing and clarity of Mission Revival with the richness and human-scaled detail of Spanish Revival, resulting in an architectural language that is both timeless and approachable. Buildings typically feature low-pitched clay tile roofs, smooth stucco finishes in light, warm tones, and a composition of simple volumes enhanced by selective ornamentation. Arches, recessed openings, and shaded walkways are commonly incorporated to create depth and visual interest, while maintaining a cohesive and unified appearance.

Recognizable characteristics of this style include articulated rooflines with parapets or modest towers, variation in facade planes to break down building scale, and the integration of outdoor spaces such as courtyards or covered entries that support social interaction and comfort. Decorative elements are used intentionally and sparingly, allowing for visual richness without overwhelming the overall simplicity of the form. The result is a balanced architectural approach that reflects Southern California's historic influences while establishing a distinct and enduring character for the community.

4.2.2 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

4.2.3 REPRESENTATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

4.3 ROOFS

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Low-pitched roofs (between 4:12 to 6:12) with broad, overhanging eaves ranging from eighteen (18) to twenty four (24) in. If conical roof is used, roof pitch must not exceed 4:12
- Clay tile, concrete-tile, or tile-profiled metal roofing. Common shapes include both Spanish (S-shaped) and Mission (half cylinder/barrel tile) types
- A minimum of one roof utilizing hip or gable roof type

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS (CHOOSE AT LEAST 1)

(Not required for buildings that qualify as Small or Medium in Chapter 3.1.2 of this document. If Medium Buildings have identified "Roof Form" as the optional Massing Strategy, then the "Optional Elements" in this section shall apply.)

- Flat roofs with parapets that have an architecturally profiled cornice and/or expressed parapet cap
- A shed roof additive element either on the side or front facing
- Hipped-roof towers or belvederes (square, rectangle or circular in plan)

PROHIBITED ELEMENTS

- Curved parapet walls shall be limited to one (1) per building and shall shall feature a simple, smooth profile without intricate detailing, jagged edges, or sharp corners.
- Each project shall have no more than four (4) roof types
- Exposed galvinized coping or sharp edged metal parapet caps for flat roofs
- Thin, flush-applied caps or edge conditions that appear lightweight or prone to warping

Red clay tile roofing

Low-pitched roofs (between 4:12 to 6:12)

No more than four (4) roof types per development

Curved parapet walls shall be limited to one (1) per building

4.4 WALLS & WINDOWS

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- A minimum four (4) in. recess for at least sixty percent (60%) of all windows and doors to emphasize wall mass, depth, and shadow
- A minimum of one (1) arched door, window, or opening along a public-facing facade
- At shallower insets (two to four (2-4) in. from the exterior wall), projecting sills, molded surrounds, lintels and/or trim shall be used to frame openings
- Simple divisions of window mullions

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS (CHOOSE AT LEAST 1)

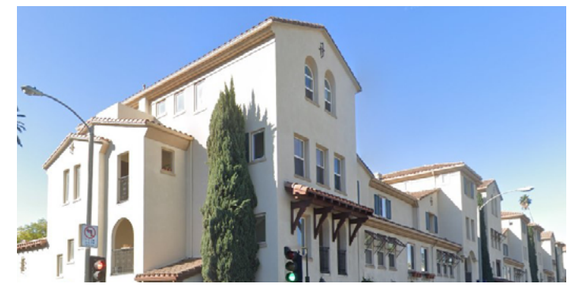
- Mix of large focal windows and smaller rectangular windows
- Minimum of one (1) ft. deep walls for public street, public easement, or residential-facing facades
- Recessed balconies with round arch openings under a separate roof or overhang
- Open balconies over loggias/arcades
- Awnings

PROHIBITED ELEMENTS

(Refer to Chapter 11.10.050(9) of the Municipal Code)

- Exterior wall surfaces shall not include striping, banding, or multi-color linear patterns
- Arch forms supported by narrow, freestanding, or visually detached columns or piers, rather than solid wall-integrated arches or arcades.
- Ornamentation or decorative detailing on columns
- Exterior shutters or window grills

Recessed balconies with arched openings



Awnings

Open balconies over loggias/arcades

Mix of large focal windows and small rectangular windows

4.5 MATERIALS & COLORS

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Stucco, cement plaster or stucco-like finishes on exterior walls. Stucco surfaces shall have a-half (1/2) to three quarters (3/4) in. bull-nosed corners
- Light, natural, neutral or muted warm colors for exterior stucco
- Roof colors shall consist of red or brown tones and be darker in value than exterior wall colors to ensure a clear visual contrast between roof and wall surfaces
- Sealant colors shall be consistent with surface and other building colors

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS (CHOOSE AT LEAST 1)

- Composite wood, or wood for railings and handrails on stairs and ramps
- Stone used as a limited accent decorative feature, providing contrast to stucco surfaces
- Sand-finished cement plaster on balcony, porch or arcade ceilings

PROHIBITED ELEMENTS

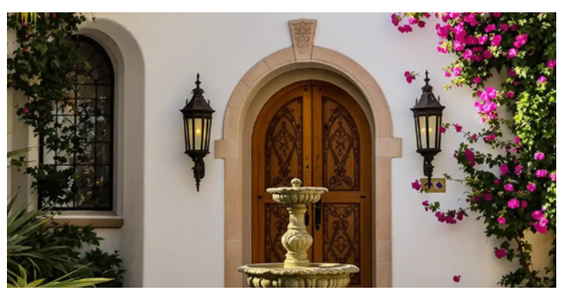
(Refer to Chapter 11.10.050 of the Municipal Code)

- Multiple primary colors within a single facade composition; wall finishes shall maintain a uniform color per building
- Exposed wooden brackets or decorative wood supports on exterior elevations
- Deeply tinted glass or applied tinted films. If tinted glazing is used, light tints and gray hues are acceptable

Stucco on exterior walls

Roof colors darker than wall colors

Sand-finished cement plaster on balcony, porch



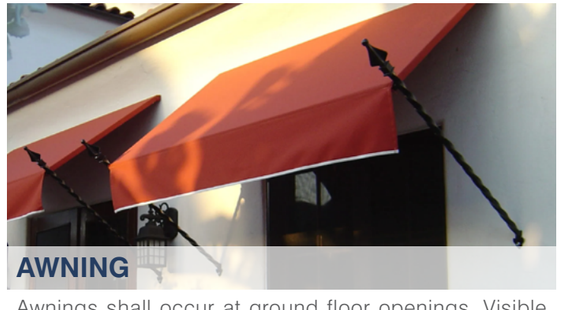
Stone as a decorative accent

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

4.6 DECORATIVE ACCENTS & DETAILS (CHOOSE AT LEAST SIX (6))

ACCENT GRILLES

Wrought iron, black or dark brown painted steel or bronze accent grilles in simple design shall be placed on exterior walls



AWNING

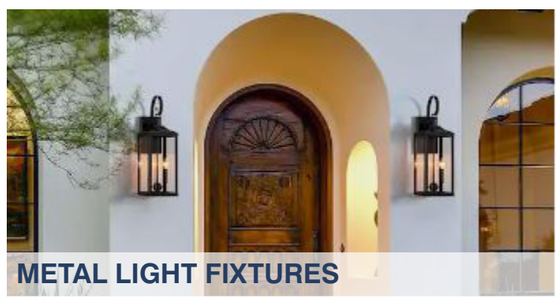
Awnings shall occur at ground floor openings. Visible decorative metal supports are acceptable. Color must be similar to the roof

DECORATIVE TILES

Decorative tiles shall be applied as a border at entrances or entry porticos

CLAY/ CONCRETE TILE VENTS

Red clay or concrete tile vents shall occur at gable ends



METAL LIGHT FIXTURES

Wrought iron, black or dark brown painted steel or bronze light fixtures shall occur at building entrances at a minimum of one (1) per two hundred (200) linear ft. of building perimeter

LOGGIAS

Provide recessed loggias framed by arches to create shaded outdoor spaces

ARCADES

Use of arcaded walkways (row of arches supported by solid wall integrated columns)

TOWER ELEMENT

Central raised element

ARCHED OPENINGS

Round-arched doors, windows, or entry openings

METAL STAIRCASE HANDRAIL

These can be used for staircase handrails. Metal can be wrought iron, bronze, or black or dark brown painted tubular steel

CURVED PARAPET WITH QUATREFOIL OPENING

Provide cement plaster or cast surrounds at curved parapet and quatrefoil openings

DOMES

A rounded vault forming the roof of a structure, typically with a circular base

LANDSCAPE 5

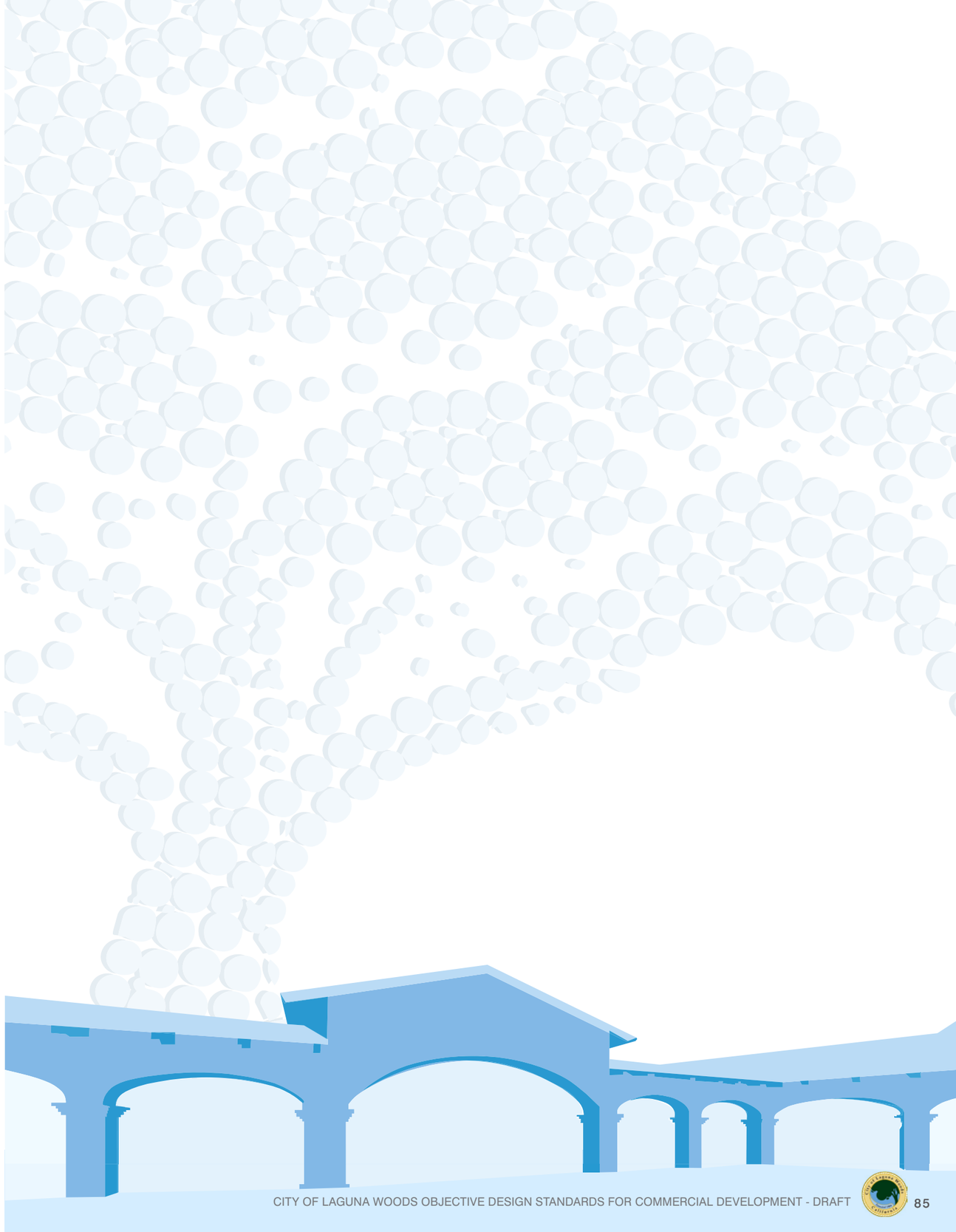
5.1 LANDSCAPE MATERIALS & VEGETATION

5.2 HARDSCAPE

5.3 WALLS & FENCES

5.4 LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

5.5 SITE FURNISHINGS



5 LANDSCAPE

5.1 LANDSCAPE MATERIALS & VEGETATION

5.1.1 LANDSCAPED AREA

1. A minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the lot area not comprised of buildings or required vehicular access and parking areas shall be comprised of pervious surfaces such as landscaping, gravel, rocks, or other similar pervious materials.
2. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the length of the property fronting arterial streets shall be maintained as a landscaped area with a minimum depth of five (5) ft. Hardscape areas containing impervious surfaces shall only be used for the purpose of pedestrian and vehicular access.
3. Landscaped areas shall not contain more than ten percent (10%) decomposed granite, gravel, mulch, rock, sand, or similar non-vegetated landscape material, except to the extent groundcover or other vegetation is also planted that will conceal at least ninety percent (90%) of the non-vegetated material upon maturity.
4. The following standards shall apply to all properties with surface parking lots:
   a. A minimum five (5) ft. landscape buffer strip shall be provided between a parking lot and public right-of-way and shall be maintained with a permanent, operable automatic irrigation system.
   b. Parking lot shade trees shall be provided at the ratio of one (1) tree for every five (5) parking spaces.
5. No vehicle shall be parked in a required landscape area.

5.1.2 SOIL DEPTH

Planting in above grade planters or podium landscaped areas shall have a minimum topsoil depth of twelve (12) in. for ground cover, twenty four (24) in. for shrubs, and thirty six (36) in. for trees.

5.1.3 SHRUBS, HEDGES, & GROUNDCOVER

5.1.3.1 GENERAL LANDSCAPE AREA

1. Plants on the Cal-IPC invasive plant inventory are prohibited.
2. Shrubs shall be a minimum size of five (5) gallons. When planted to serve as a hedge or screen, shrubs shall be planted with two (2) ft. or four (4) ft. of spacing, depending on the plant species.
3. Groundcover shall be minimum one (1) gallon or greater in size at time of planting and shall be planted at an on center spacing appropriate to the plant species to ensure complete coverage from plant to plant, (minimum twenty four (24) in. o.c.). Groundcover from cuttings or flats is allowable but shall be spaced at a maximum of twelve (12) in. on center.
4. Landscaping shall comply with the sight clearance triangle requirements set forth in Laguna Woods Municipal Code Title 13, Sec. 13.16.190 (Landscaping) and Sec. 13.16.230 (Fences and walls).

5.1.3.2 TURF AND ARTIFICIAL TURF

1. Turf is prohibited unless it meets the definition of “functional turf,” set forth in California Water Code Section 10608.12.
2. Artificial plants and artificial turf are prohibited.
3. Natural turf areas shall be a minimum ten (10) ft. diameter, or ten (10) ft. width on any side. Use of turf shall be in compliance with the California Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO).

5.1.3.3 NON-PLANT MATERIALS, SOIL, AND MULCH

1. Landscaped areas where plant material other than turf is present shall be top-dressed with three (3) in. shredded mulch or two (2) in. crushed rock, mulch, pebbles or stones to avoid exposed bare soil.
2. Three (3) in. minimum depth bark mulch must be confined to areas underneath shrubs and trees and shall not count toward the fifty percent (50%) minimum landscape requirement.

5.1.4 TREES

5.1.4.1 TREES TYPES

Trees provided as part of the project shall be selected from the following list:

a. Arbutus Unedo (Strawberry Tree)[1]

b. Cupaniopsis Anacardioides (Carrotwood)[1;2]

c. Cercis Canadensis (Eastern Redbud)

d. Geijera Parviflora (Australian Willow)[1]

e. Koelreuteria Paniculata (Goldenrain Tree)[2]

f. Liriodendron Tulipifera (Tulip Tree)[2]

g. Olea Europaea (Olive Tree)[1]

h. Phoenix Dactylifera (Date Palm)[1]

i. Pinus Canariensis (Canary Island Pine)[1]

j. Platanus Racemosa (California Sycamore)[2]

k. Prosopis Alba 'Colorado' (Argentine Mesquite)[2]

l. Prosopis 'Phoenix' (Phoenix Mesquite)[2]

m. Quercus Agrifolia (Coast Live Oak)[1]

n. Rhus Iancea (African Sumac)[1;2]

o. Syagrus Romanzoffianum (Queen Palm)[1]

[1] Evergreen tree
[2] Shade tree

5.1.4.2 GENERAL LANDSCAPE AREA

1. All tree planting shall be installed at a minimum twenty four (24) in. box size and a maximum distance of thirty (30) ft. on center. A minimum of fifty-one percent (51%) of all trees planted shall be a minimum thirty-six (36) in. box size at the time of installation.
2. Trees planted along pedestrian corridors, paths, walkways, commercial frontages, or public streets shall be spaced at a maximum interval of thirty (30) ft. on center.
3. Projects that are greater than or equal to two (2) acres, or shopping center entrances that serve a cumulative commercial area of over five (5) acres, shall include, along the primary entrance, a landscaped median and landscaped side areas planted with Phoenix Dactylifera (Date Palm) at a maximum spacing of thirty (30) ft. on center, with a minimum ten (10) ft. brown trunk height measured from finished grade to the base of the lowest living frond.
4. Corner sites, defined as properties with frontage along two intersecting public streets, shall plant Syagrus romanzoffiana (Queen Palms) or Phoenix dactylifera (Date Palms) at a maximum spacing of thirty (30) ft. on center, with a minimum ten (10) ft. brown trunk height (BTH), measured from finished grade to the base of the lowest living fond. They shall be planted within the first thirty (30) ft. of each street frontage measured from the corner property line.
5. Publicly accessible open spaces that include trees with a minimum mature canopy spread of twenty five (25) ft., and shall locate trees to shade pedestrian paths, seating areas, and gathering spaces. Trees shall be selected from the following list: Cupaniopsis Anacardioides (Carrotwood), Koelreuteria Paniculata (Goldenrain Tree), Liriodendron Tulipifera (Tulip Tree), Platanus Racemosa (California Sycamore), Prosopis Alba 'Colorado' (Argentine Mesquite), Prosopis 'Phoenix' (Phoenix Mesquite), Rhus Iancea (African Sumac).
6. Trees planted along pedestrian corridors, paths, and walkways shall be selected from the following species: Cupaniopsis anacardioides (Carrotwood), Koelreuteria paniculata (Goldenrain Tree), Platanus racemosa (California Sycamore), Syagrus romanzoffiana (Queen Palm), or Phoenix dactylifera (Date Palm). Syagrus romanzoffiana (Queen Palm) and Phoenix Dactylifera (Date Palm) shall be planted at a maximum spacing of thirty (30) ft. on center, with a minimum ten (10) ft. brown trunk height measured from finished grade to the base of the lowest living frond.
7. A minimum distance of ten (10) ft. is required between the center of trees to street light standards, water meters, back-flow prevention systems, sewer cleanouts and fire hydrants.
8. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of all trees planted on the project site shall be evergreen trees.

5.1.4.3 SURFACE PARKING AREA

1. Planter islands or planter fingers shall be provided at the ends of all parking rows.
2. A minimum five (5) ft. planting width is required for all planter islands, planter fingers, and tree wells.
3. A row of side-by-side (contiguous) parking spaces shall not exceed five (5) stalls without a planter island, planter finger or tree well.
4. Trees shall be planted in planter islands, planter fingers, or tree wells at a minimum of every fifty (50) ft. on center.

5.1.4.4 TREE PROTECTION

1. At the time of installation, newly planted trees shall be supported with double stakes and/or guy wires or approved equivalent City standard.
2. Trees planted within ten (10) ft. of a street, sidewalk, paved trail or walkway shall be deeply-rooted species or shall be separated from paved surfaces by a minimum twenty four (24) in. root barrier to prevent physical damage to public improvements.
3. Existing trees that are already established on a project site may be retained at the property owner's discretion, regardless of whether the tree species is included in the approved tree selection list identified in Section 5.1.4.1, Tree Types of this Objective Design Standards. Determination as to whether an existing tree is established shall be determined by a certified arborist.
4. Where an existing tree is removed and replacement planting is required pursuant to Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 4.26.060(c), Tree Removal- Replacement, of the Laguna Woods Municipal Code, the replacement tree shall be selected from the approved tree selection list identified in Section 5.1.4.1, Tree Types, of these Objective Design Standards.
5. Existing trees to be retained on site shall be appropriately protected during construction and incorporated into the overall landscape design of the project.

5.1.5 RESIDENTIAL BUFFERING

1. Projects abutting residentially zoned properties shall provide a minimum ten (10) ft. wide landscape buffer (A) along the entire length of the shared property line. The buffer shall include one (1) tree every thirty five (35) ft. (B) and a solid masonry wall (C) with a six (6) ft. height along the entire lenth of the abutting property. All walls shall comply with Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 13.16.230.
2. Whenever a project shares a side or rear property line with any residentially zoned lot, and non-residential uses are located within fifteen (15) ft. of that side or rear property line, a six (6) ft. tall solid masonry wall shall be provided, along or adjacent to all such side and rear lot lines. The wall shall conform to the height regulations applicable to front setback areas of the residentially zoned lot having the common lot line, per Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 13.16.230. A landscape buffer, with a minimum depth of five (5) ft. shall also be provided along the shared lot lines.

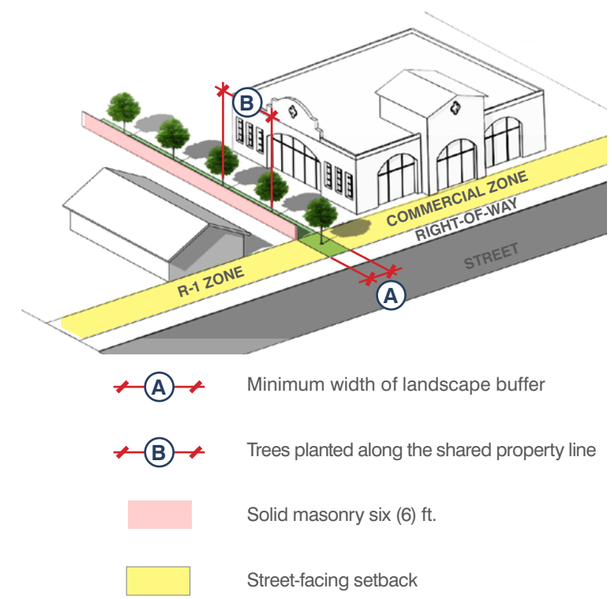


FIGURE 5.1: RESIDENTIAL BUFFERING

5.1.6 DROUGHT TOLERANT & NATIVE PLANT SPECIES

A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of non-turf landscaped areas shall be planted with materials identified as appropriate by the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) for Region 3 (South Coastal). Refer to latest WUCOLS recommendations from California Center for Urban Horticulture WUCOLS website <https://ccuh.ucdavis.edu/wucols>.

5.1.7 PROTECTION FROM ENCROACHMENT

1. Landscaping shall be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment by raised planting surfaces, providing appropriately planned walkways, the use of curbs, and installing hedges to direct the flow of pedestrian traffic.
2. At parking stalls, one (1) wheel stop per stall must be provided if a raised planter curb is not present to prevent vehicles from damaging adjacent tree trunks or landscaping.

5.1.8 INTERFERENCE WITH UTILITIES

1. All service areas, storage areas and utility and equipment locations shall be coordinated between landscape architect and civil engineer.
2. Plant materials shall be placed so that they do not interfere with the lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes.
3. Trees or large shrubs shall not be planted under overhead lines or over underground utilities if their growth might interfere with such public utilities.
4. Plant material setbacks from utilities shall conform to utility company requirements.

5.1.9 SAFETY

All trees should be cut so that no branches or leaves hang lower than ten (10) ft. from the finish surface/ ground plane.

5.2 HARDSCAPE

5.2.1 LOCATION

1. Primary entries to buildings shall provide decorative paving that contrasts in color and texture with the adjacent walkway paving to accentuate the entrances.
2. Asphalt and standard concrete shall be used only in areas of high traffic volume and service areas unseen by the average commercial tenant or visitor.

5.2.2 APPEARANCE & MATERIALS

1. Hardscape materials shall be constructed of firm and slip-resistant materials, see Table 5.2.
2. No stained or stamped concrete shall be used in any area as non-integral colored concrete quickly fades and stamped patterns become unsightly and unrecognizable over time.
3. Integral color concrete shall be non-fading pigment thoroughly mixed into the full concrete depth; no top-layer surfacing color mixture is allowed.

ORDER OF PREFERRED PAVING OPTIONS

VEHICULAR	PEDESTRIAN
1. CONCRETE PAVERS[1]	1. CLAY OR CONCRETE PAVERS[1]
2. INTEGRAL COLORED CONCRETE[2]	2. CONCRETE WITH AGGREGATE
3. ASPHALT	3. INTEGRAL COLORED CONCRETE[2]
	4. STANDARD CONCRETE (NATURAL GRAY)

[1] Pavers shall be installed over a concrete slab to ensure a stable, durable, and level surface.

[2] Using Scofield, Davis Color or City Approved Equivalent.

TABLE 5.1: ORDER OF PREFERRED PAVING OPTIONS

5.3 WALLS & FENCES

5.3.1 APPEARANCE AND INTEGRATION

Walls and fences shall be designed to be consistent with adjacent structures and the surrounding terrain, and shall incorporate landscaping and vegetation to soften their appearance, while complying with Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 13.16.230.

5.3.1.1 MATERIALS & COLOR

1. Walls and fencing shall consist of solid masonry material, incorporating building colors.
2. Acceptable finish treatments include colored stucco, wood stain, natural or polished stone, slump stone, split-faced concrete block, prefabricated finish texture, or a combination thereof.
3. Open metal fencing may be used in lieu of solid masonry walls where necessary to maintain visibility at driveways, vehicle turning areas, pedestrian paths, public walkways, and similar locations. Such fencing shall provide a minimum of fifty percent (50%) transparency and shall be consistent with the architectural style.

5.3.1.2 VISUAL INTERESTS

1. Walls shall provide a minimum three (3) ft. wide landscaped area to screen and soften the wall base, except where interrupted by required pedestrian access, vehicular access, utilities, or fire access. Planting within the landscaped area shall achieve a minimum height of three (3) ft. at maturity. For walls greater than six (6) ft. in height, planting within the landscaped area shall achieve a minimum height of four (4) ft. at maturity.
2. Evergreen trees shall be used to soften the appearance of blank walls and provide visual screening; a minimum of one (1) tree shall be provided for each blank wall segment up to fifteen (15) ft. in length, and two (2) trees shall be provided for segments up to the maximum permitted length of twenty five (25) ft.

5.3.2 WALL CAPS

Wall caps shall be incorporated as a horizontal design element at the top of walls and shall not exceed four (4) in. in vertical thickness. Decorative capstones on stucco walls shall be implemented to prevent water damage from rainfall and moisture.

5.4 LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

This section supplements the site lighting standards set forth in Section 2.6.

5.4.1 TYPES OF LIGHTING

Landscape architects and electrical engineers shall implement a variety of lighting types shown in the table below to illuminate the project's landscape appropriately.

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING: TYPES

	DEFINITION
SPOTLIGHT	Known as uplights, downlights, directional lights or bullets most commonly used to illuminate trees in the landscape.
PATH & AREA	Path lights illuminate paths and walkways. Area lights increase visibility to the area around the fixture and can be used to light landscape beds.
FLOOD LIGHTS	Flood lights add security and light up property at night. Flood lights commonly have a much higher wattage and wider angle than spotlights.
WALL WASH LIGHTS	This type of flood light is used to provide even illumination across a wide surface.
WELL LIGHTS	Well and in-grade lights are installed below ground (grade) level. The fixture may sit in a turf area or hardscape where foot or vehicular traffic will pass over.
DECK LIGHTS	Deck lights are designed to attach to fence posts and can be mounted on the sides of nearby structures and stairs.
STEP LIGHTS	Step lights illuminate treads and or risers of stairs.
HARDSCAPE LIGHTS	Hardscape lights attach to the underside of capstones and overhangs most commonly floodlight surfaces such as patios, walkways, driveways, stairs, walls and outdoor kitchens or fireplaces.

TABLE 5.2: LANDSCAPE LIGHTING TYPE DEFINITION

5.4.2 LOCATION

1. Accent lighting shall be used to illuminate walkways, parking areas, entries, seating areas, and/or specimen plants and trees.
2. Spotlighting or glare from any site lighting shall be shielded from adjacent properties and directed at a specific on-site object or target area.
3. Landscape lighting fixtures shall be incorporated in water features.
4. Path lights, if used, shall be placed min. twelve (12) to eighteen (18) in. away from edge of paving and be incorporated with landscape rock/boulders or similar objects for protection.

5.4.3 LIGHT COLOR

The color of landscape lighting is essential as it provides appropriate warmth to outdoor spaces, enhancing the atmosphere and overall aesthetic of the project. Thoughtful selection of light color creates a welcoming environment that complements the natural landscape and architectural features. The standard of light color is as follows:

LIGHT COLOR

	MIN.	MAX.
COLOR TEMPERATURE (KELVIN)	3000	2700

TABLE 5.3: LIGHT COLOR TEMPERATURE STANDARD

5.4.4 CONCEALMENTS

Light sources for wall washing and tree lighting shall be hidden.

5.4.5 FIXTURE DESIGN

Lighting fixtures shall complement and be compatible with the overall landscape material palette and design theme, as well as the building's design and architectural style.

5.5 SITE FURNISHINGS

5.5.1 LOCATION

1. Site furnishings within open spaces shall be arranged in coordinated groupings that support the intended use of the space, provide seating in shaded areas, and integrate with features such as plazas or water elements, while minimizing visual clutter within the landscape.
2. The use of benches in the public right-of-way shall be limited; groupings of individual chairs for seating options are preferred.

5.5.2 APPEARANCE & MATERIALS

1. Simple designs, instead of ornate decorations, shall be specified for their timeless appeal and ability to be complimentary to the Laguna Woods Revival architectural style.
2. When wood is used as a furnishing material, the wood products must comply with the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC's) approved list of products and manufacturers, which regulates environmentally responsible forest management.

5.5.3 PLAN SUBMISSION

Applicant shall submit product cut sheets of each typical piece of furniture for City approval.

5.5.4 POTS

For sites where a landscaping area cannot be provided due to required pedestrian clearances, ADA access, fire access, utility access, drainage, visibility, structural slab conditions, or operational access needs, decorative pottery or planters may be used as an alternative landscape treatment, subject to the following:

1. Pottery shall be used to direct flow of pedestrian traffic or provide an elevation and height design aesthetic in relationship to the adjacent architecture.
2. Selection of plant material placed in pottery shall be appropriate for growing and irrigation conditions of the pot(s).
3. Pottery design, massing, materiality and color shall be complementary to the Laguna Woods Revival architectural style.