



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
May 24, 2016**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Agenda Item # 8

SUBJECT: Receive the final report from the Downtown Buildings Committee, and direct staff accordingly

BACKGROUND

In November of 2014, the City Council formed a Downtown Buildings Committee (DBC) to review recently completed buildings in Downtown Los Altos within the context of the current zoning regulations, adopted Downtown Design Guidelines, and Downtown Design Plan, along with the results of the 2012 and 2014-15 downtown surveys.

On February 24, 2015, the City Council appointed 11 residents to the Committee. The appointed Committee includes residents Thomas Barton, Anita Kay Enander, Hillary Frank (resigned), Deborah Hope, Edward Infante, Pat Marriott, Susan Mensinger, Teresa Morris, Jane Reed, Denis Salmon, and Nancy Neelson Sec. Councilmember Megan Satterlee served as the Chair and facilitator of the Committee.

The charge to the Committee was to determine next steps to ensure new buildings in the Downtown meet Community expectations. The Committee was also charged with developing a statement of expected outcomes.

The Committee has completed its work and presents its recommendations to the City Council in the attached document (Attachment 1) titled Downtown Buildings Committee Final Report, dated May 4, 2016. The City Council is being asked to receive the report and provide direction on the Committee's recommendation.

EXISTING POLICIES

Los Altos General Plan Community Design and Historic Resources Element and Land Use Element
Los Altos Municipal Code, Title 14, Zoning
Los Altos Downtown Design Plan
Los Altos Downtown Design Guidelines

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

The City Council has met with the Downtown Buildings Committee at three study sessions held on:

- January 26, 2016
- April 12, 2016
- April 21, 2016

DISCUSSION

Following their appointment by the City Council in February 2015, the Committee started its work in March of that same year. An initial step of the Committee was to form subcommittees to review and evaluate topics related to development in the Downtown. Three subcommittees were formed and members of the committee appointed to each evaluated the following specific topics:

- 1) Documents, Process, & Procedures;
- 2) Height, Bulk, Mass; and
- 3) Pedestrian Experience

The Downtown Buildings Committee has completed its work and has finalized its recommendations to the City Council. The attached report organizes the work of the Committee into twelve topics and provides the Committee's findings on each of the topics along with recommendations intended to foster buildings in the Downtown that meet the expectations of the Community. The report also includes exhibits intended to support and demonstrate how the recommendations can be achieved. As listed on the front page of the report – the Committee's Goals were to:

- Recommend changes to zoning and other requirements that will produce development more aligned with community expectations.
- Improve predictability in future downtown development: ensure there are no surprises for developers or residents.
- Make commercial development smoother and more transparent for all: developers, staff, commissioners, council and residents.
- Expedite the process by clearly defining community expectations.
- Get the quality development we want and deserve.

The recommendations of the Committee – as described in greater detail in the report are as follows:

1. DOCUMENTATION

1. A. Revise the Design Guidelines.
1. B. Revise and update existing planning documents to ensure consistent terminology throughout.
1. C. Discard obsolete documents and keep all documents current.
1. D. Make zoning code the single source for explicit, measurable requirements. Don't duplicate requirements across multiple documents.
1. E. Make more use of illustrations and diagrams in all documents.
1. F. Put all documents online and make them interactive with links to each other and relevant City codes

2. ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY

2. A. Revise the existing planning page on the city website to include all steps in the process and provide links to relevant documents ...
2. B. As a long term goal, provide the means for developers to make submissions online.

3. PROCESS/PROCEDURES

3. A. Provide detailed checklists for developers at every step of the planning process for consistency and accountability.
3. B. Attach the completed Design Guidelines checklist to each staff report.
3. C. Create a standard template for staff reports
3. D. Require an early stage design review for new commercial and multi-family projects and major remodels in the downtown triangle. This design review to be done with consulting professional having specific expertise, paid for by the developer.

Receive the final report from the Downtown Buildings Committee, and direct staff accordingly

3. E. To ensure that Council-approved DBC recommendations are implemented in a timely way, create a workplan with measurable milestones for each to track progress.

4. HEIGHT, BULK, and MASS

4. A. Amend the height limits for the CD and CD/R3 zones so that commercial and mixed-use structures do not exceed 30 feet in height and entirely residential projects do not exceed 35 feet in height.
4. B. Adopt an ordinance establishing a temporary moratorium on new construction in the CD and CD/R3 zones that does not meet the height limits recommended above, pending completion of the process needed to act on and implement the zoning changes.

5. HEIGHT EXCEPTIONS PER 14.66.240

5. A. Amend 14.66.240 (A) and (E) to group structures that are related to building design, equipment or mechanical screening separate from other structures (e.g. flag pole and antennae). Make the maximum height for such structures 8 feet instead of 15.
5. B. Remove language in guidelines and plans that encourage towers (Downtown Design Plan p. 11, 22, 35). Direct staff to prepare and add definition for “penthouse” and “tower” to the general definitions at 14.02.070. Specify that penthouse is not a habitable or commercial space but is intended to provide an architecturally pleasing cover to stairwells, elevator equipment, etc.

6. ARTICULATION

6. A. Amend Design Control to require articulation for every building over 50 feet wide and require changes of plane in the horizontal and vertical aspects.
6. B. Through development requirements and guidelines, encourage variation in building-entrance configuration and other aspects of the front of the building, upper levels, and roofline, to avoid a “tunnel” that would result from having all buildings constructed to the minimum setback. Instruct staff and the PTC to encourage creative articulations at street level rather than building to the minimum setback.

7. SIDEWALKS

7. A. Require minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet that is generally clear of all obstructions such as signage and utility poles (consistent with streetscape plan previously implemented for the north end of First Street).
7. B. Where sidewalks are not more than 6 feet wide, prohibit walls or any obstructing hedges or similar plantings within the first two feet of setback. This is advisable because pedestrians avoid the 24 inch area next to a wall of any height and also avoid 18 inches near the curb. This effectively leaves only 18 inches of a 5-foot wide sidewalk for walking. (See *EXHIBIT 7.2*.)
7. C. Where code currently requires side or rear setback of 2 feet where property adjoins public right of way, change language to require setback of at least 2 feet and as much as 5 feet if needed to create safe pedestrian walkways, supplemented with suitable landscaping.

8. LANDSCAPE

8. A. When full landscape plans are submitted for City review, City staff should convene a small group composed of a landscape designer or architect, arborist (if plan involves trees), and City

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maintenance employee with plant-care expertise to review the plan and provide input to the planning staff and subsequent reviewers.

8. B. Task the City arborist to develop a list of recommended trees and minimum sizes for each.
8. C. Require that plans for care and maintenance be submitted along with landscaping plans.
8. D. Implement companion plantings that will contribute to the desired Downtown Guideline that recommends an appearance of abundant and substantial landscaping.
8. E. Enforce current Design Guidelines (Section 3.1.2a) that recommend “use [of] abundant landscaping” for wall covering and store front landscaping. Provide “now” and “later” (+5 years) landscaping photos plus photos of desirable landscapes and those that are unattractive.
8. F. Increase landscaping in the front of buildings. (Also refer to Recommendation 7B.)
8. G. Create a list of suggested plants for the developer to consider when creating the landscape design. The suggested list should be developed by the city arborist and gardening staff, with experience derived from caring for plantings in downtown.
8. H. Incorporate requirements for amenities and landscaping in the setback and along building fronts in any future streetscape plan for First Street between Main and San Antonio, and encourage additional setbacks for landscaping.

9. QUALITY OF BUILDING MATERIALS

9. A. Modify the required finding as follows:

“Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, bay, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. Materials, finishes, and colors used serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and in the downtown village.”

9. B. Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review, item 7 Color Renderings and 3D Model” and/or the Design Guidelines to require that proposed buildings in the Downtown district be modeled using 3D and other forms of digital simulation that depict the Materials Board and allow for closer consideration of proposed colors and textures of exterior finishes in context.
9. C. Require submission of a physical Materials Board of samples of colors, materials and finishes in the submission requirement checklist.
9. D. Require submission of larger scale samples and/or examples of uses of the materials and finishes in prior projects for materials and finishes not in common use in the Downtown district.

10. SHADOWS

- 10.A. As neither staff nor PTC have such expertise, the city should engage a specialist with knowledge of standard practice for evaluating daylight/shadow impacts in a commercial setting. Scope of work should include identifying the tools and recommending a process for evaluating the impact of proposed developments on the streetscape, sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscape plans. Create a process for including such evaluation in the decision making process.

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- 10.B. Generalized modeling should be done of the light and shadows for the downtown area as currently built and at full build-out under specified zoning. (See Section 12, Physical and Digital Models.)
- 10.C. If warranted based on the full-city model, establish light plane guidelines for commercial development. [Note: There are light plane guidelines in place for residential buildings.]

11. VIEWS

- 11.A. Make preservation of existing views of the surrounding hills and downtown tree canopy a part of the Design Review process for buildings in the Downtown triangle.
- 11.B. Specify views to protect, with emphasis on the foothills as seen from southbound San Antonio Road and treescape from State and Main Streets. Document the selected views in the design guidelines and include photographs. Specify how submittals should address the issue of views.

12. DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL MODELS

- 12.A. Undertake a project to identify 3D modeling software.
- 12.B. Develop digital and physical model of the downtown triangle using parameters specified by Council.
- 12.C. Require developers to provide data necessary to model their proposal to the digital system described above.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

The DBC, as directed, provided their recommendations to the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC), at its meeting on January 7, 2016. After presentations by staff and DBC members and deliberations, the PTC voted on the recommendations. A portion of the January 7, 2016 PTC minutes are included with this report (Attachment 2) as are staff's PTC agenda report and the recommendations by the DBC at that time (Attachment 3).

The following is a listing of the recommendations by the DBC that the PTC supported and opposed:

SUPPORT

- Wider sidewalks and bulk reduction, but not the proposed recommendation without a feasibility study.
- Amend the height limitations and exceptions with regard to improving the photographic examples in the Downtown Design Guidelines, and to amend the submittal requirements and staff reporting to highlight height exceptions.
- Providing street trees with generous canopies, appropriate spacing, but that such regulations needed further study to determine appropriate heights and spacing.
- Including landscape concepts in a development checklist and to better define landscape guidelines.
- Modifying the findings to clarify and strengthen the language with regard to building materials.
- Adding a design guideline checklist, combining the Mixed-Commercial and First Street District in the Guidelines, ensuring consistent terminology in documents, maintaining current documents and purging outdated documents, use more illustrations and diagrams

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where appropriate in all documents, make documents interactive with online links, and include more detailed checklists outlining all phases of the planning process.

- Application access and transparency and empowerment, enforcement and accountability of the City standards.

OPPOSE

- Reducing the height limit in the CD and CD/R3 districts and the setback increases to the CD/R3 district.
- Increasing the building articulation requirements in the CD district.
- Limit the height of towers and remove guidelines encouraging towers.
- Requiring daylight plane and shadow studies, and specialists for considering such information.
- Regulations with regard to protecting views.

Following the Planning and Transportation Commission meeting, the Committee met several more times, including study sessions with the City Council. The Committee used these meetings to refine their recommendation based on the feedback they had received.

On April 27, 2016, the Downtown Buildings Committee met one last time to review its recommendations to the City Council. Following a discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to forward their work to the City Council with a recommendation that each the Committee's recommendations be adopted and implemented.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Many of the recommendations by the Committee can be implemented at the administrative level, such as updates to forms and handouts, revising planning documents, modifying staff reports, and enlisting the assistance of design professionals with expertise in specific areas such as landscaping, encouraging articulation and variations in design (expectation of high quality architectural designs) changing the Department's web page, and making applications available on-line. Other recommendations, such as the ordinance changes, shadow and view analysis, will require more evaluation to determine the extent of resources needed to successfully implement them – and also provide an opportunity for the community to evaluate and provide its input. Should Council direct – staff can begin the implementation of the recommendations that only involve administrative efforts and return with a work plan for those items that require resource commitments.

DOWNTOWN VISIONING

One of the City Council's stated Goals is a Visioning Process for the Downtown that includes an economic component. One of the principal reasons for an extensive visioning process is to garner broad community input and support for a unified vision for the Downtown. The visioning process is yet to get underway; however, much of what the DBC has recommended would be beneficial in shaping the discussion on the Visioning effort. Staff supports and recommends including the work of the DBC into the Visioning process and that an effort to start the visioning get underway as soon as possible.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

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FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

Undetermined. As noted above, some of the recommendations of the Downtown Buildings Committee will require staffing and funding resources. In order to determine resource needed to carry out the recommendations, staff will need to evaluate each and determine how best to implement the policies and incorporate or modify existing administrative permit processing systems.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A planning study is statutorily exempt from environmental review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15262.

DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Recommendation of the Downtown Buildings Committee is for the City Council to receive their report and direct implementation of their recommendations

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. The administrative items that are consistent with the Community Development Director's efforts to enhance service, encourage high quality projects, and heighten project review in Los Altos will be implemented by the Department as soon as practical.
2. The policy and code changes requiring City Council consideration and decisions should be included in the Downtown visioning process where they can be reviewed and discussed by the broader Los Altos Community.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Receive report and the recommendations of the Downtown Buildings Committee and take no further action.
2. Refer some or all of the recommendations of the Downtown Buildings Committee to Staff and direct that staff return with an implementation and schedule for those recommendations requiring resource expenditures.
3. Refer the recommendations back to the Downtown Buildings Committee with direction to address specific items identified by the City Council.
4. Direct that the recommendations of the Downtown Buildings Committee be incorporated into the Downtown Vision process.

Prepared by: Jon Biggs, Community Development Director

Approved by: Chris Jordan, Interim City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Recommendations of the Downtown Building Committee
2. January 7, 2016 Planning and Transportation Commission Minutes
3. January 7, 2016 Planning and Transportation Commission Agenda Report on Downtown Building Committee recommendations

Receive the final report from the Downtown Buildings Committee, and direct staff accordingly

DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Final Report 5-4-16

INTRODUCTION

In October 2014, Councilwoman Megan Satterlee recommended that the City Council appoint an ad hoc committee “to determine next steps to ensure new buildings downtown meet community expectations.” (See *APPENDIX A* for the committee’s charter.)

The impetus for forming the committee was resident reaction to new developments downtown, particularly along First Street. While not all residents dislike the new buildings, many—including some council members and PTC commissioners—were surprised by

- Height, bulk and mass
- Canyon effect created by tall buildings along a narrow street
- Disregard for “village character”
- Lack of appropriate landscaping
- Poor quality materials on some buildings

Council appointed the committee members in February 2015. Meetings began in March. The focus was on determining whether existing codes and guidelines were adequate and to make recommendations to ensure that future development meets community expectations with no surprises.

The committee was instructed to focus on residents’ aspirations for the downtown and to exclude economic analysis.

Resources consulted by the committee are listed in *APPENDIX B*.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tom Barton, Anita Enander, Hillary Frank (resigned), Deb Hope, Edward Infante, Pat Marriott, Susan Mensinger, Teresa Morris, Nan Nealon See, Jane Reed, Denis Salmon

(See *APPENDIX C* for members’ expertise and experience.)

SUBCOMMITTEES

Documents, Process & Procedures: Hope, Marriott, Mensinger, Reed

Height, Bulk, Mass: Barton, Enander, Infante, Nealon See

Pedestrian Experience: Morris, Salmon

COMMITTEE GOALS

- Recommend changes to zoning and other requirements that will produce development more aligned with community expectations.
- Improve predictability in future downtown development: ensure there are no surprises for developers or residents.
- Make commercial development smoother and more transparent for all: developers, staff, commissioners, council and residents.
- Expedite the process by clearly defining community expectations.
- Get the quality development we want and deserve.

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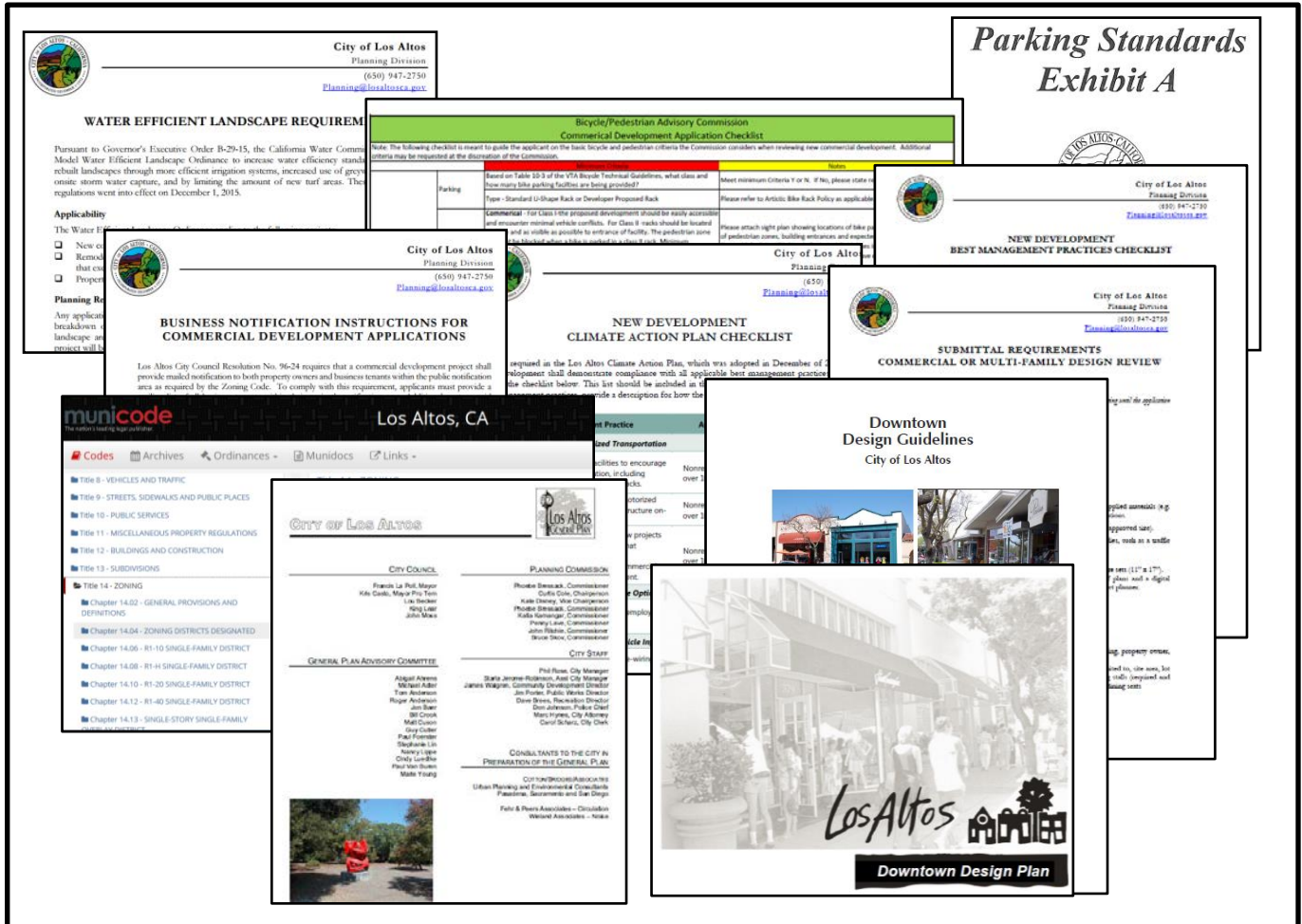
DOCUMENTATION, PROCESS & PROCEDURES SUBCOMMITTEE

1. DOCUMENTATION

FINDINGS:

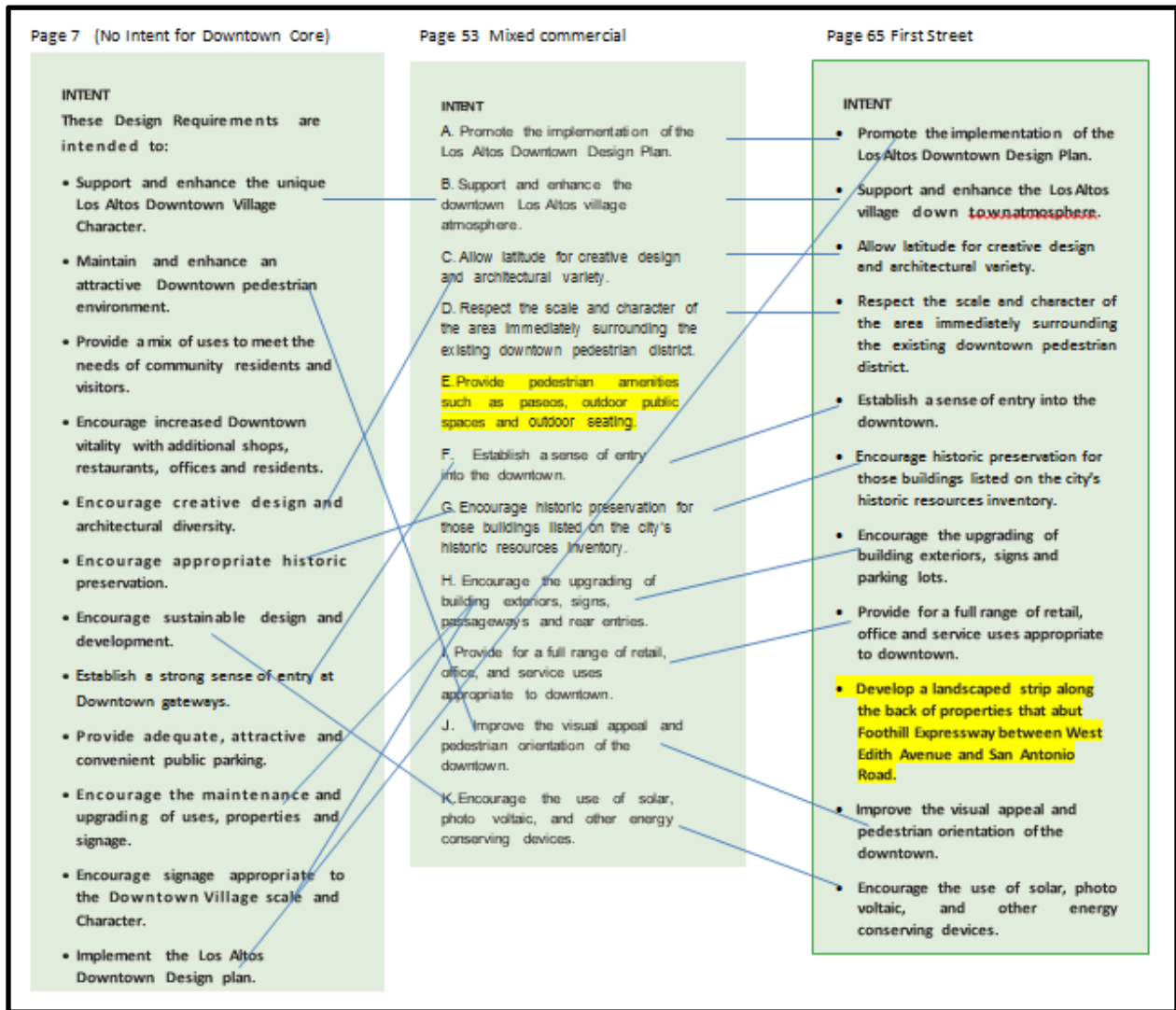
- Inadequate document management system.
- Lack of consistency and coherence across city documents.

Figure 1: Some of the documents a developer consults. (See EXHIBIT 1.1 for list of planning documents.)



These documents go back to the General Plan from 2002. Because they were written and revised over time – by different people – they can be redundant and confusing. Yet there’s a consistent thread through them – and through history: the desire to keep our village atmosphere, a pedestrian focus and a human scale.

Figure 2: Statements of Intent within the Design Guidelines are repeated in a different form throughout the document, all similar to – but slightly different – from the Purpose statements in the zoning code. A similar problem exists in zoning code Purposes.



The same lack of consistency is evident in the Design Guidelines text, as well as in the zoning code.

Figure 3: Examples

- Zones are referred to as districts, e.g., Chapter 14.44 - CD COMMERCIAL DOWNTOWN DISTRICT*
- Specific Purposes in zoning code are similar to Intents in Design Guidelines (Figure 2), i.e., different words in different order.
- 14.44.020 - Specific purposes (CD zone).
 - D. Preserve and improve the character of the area immediately surrounding the existing downtown pedestrian district; (There is no “downtown pedestrian district.” Should be the Downtown Core District.)

Also, while most measurable requirements (height, setbacks, etc.) are specified in the zoning code, some (courtyard and paseo dimensions) are defined in the Design Guidelines, but not in the zoning code.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Revise the Design Guidelines as follows:

- 1) Edit for clarification, consistency and future interactive online use. Remove redundancy (see Figure 2 above), streamline content. *EXHIBIT 1.2* outlines modifications. (A draft has already been completed.)
- 2) Add a Design Guidelines checklist (*EXHIBIT 1.3*) to make it easy for developers, city planners, PTC, Council and residents to ensure a project is conforming – and to recognize when it is not.
- 3) Combine Mixed Commercial District (Chapter 4) and First Street District (Chapter 5) into the “Perimeter District.” Chapters 4 and 5 have only 2 differences:
 - 45-foot height in CH 4, which is specified in the zoning code and should not be in the Design Guidelines.
 - CH 4 calls for underground or roof parking. CH 5 calls for rear parking. These differences are called out in the zoning codes.

B. Revise and update existing planning documents to ensure consistent terminology throughout.

Examples of inconsistencies are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 above.

C. Discard obsolete documents and keep all documents current.

When downtown visioning takes place, it may be appropriate to discard the existing Downtown Design Plan.

D. Make zoning code the single source for explicit, measurable requirements. Don’t duplicate requirements across multiple documents.

Duplicating information in multiple documents is confusing, makes updates more difficult and leads to inconsistencies.

One example is defining “human scale.” Our committee found numerous books, papers, videos and other sources of information on this subject. An excellent example from the city of Powell, Ohio provides – in just 10 pages – an overview of key factors. (*EXHIBIT 1.4*) Use this document or one similar to it to define our requirements for pedestrian/human scale.

E. Make more use of illustrations and diagrams in all documents.

Planning, architecture, design, landscape are all visual endeavors. A picture is worth 1,000 words, particularly when multiple people have to agree on complex development concepts. Follow the examples in *EXHIBITS 1.4 and 1.5* to ensure detailed, unambiguous requirements.

F. Put all documents online and make them interactive with links to each other and to relevant city codes.

The city is looking for a new IT manager. This would be an excellent project for him/her to address. A GIS mapping system (*EXHIBIT 1.6*) could be the starting point for accessing the planning system.

EXHIBIT 1.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FORMS AND HANDOUTS

<http://www.losaltosca.gov/communitydevelopment/page/forms-and-handouts-0>

Forms and Handouts

Below is a list of links to commonly used forms and informational handouts.

Forms

General Application
Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet
Outdoor Display Permit Application & Materials
Tree Removal Permit Application

Handouts

Business Tenant Notification Instructions for Commercial Development
Certificate of Compliance
Childcare - Preschools
Commercial Trash Enclosures
Commercial & Multi-Family Design Review Submittal Requirements
Commercial TI and Minor Additions Design Review Submittal Requirements
Construction Equipment BMP Handout
Construction Hours
Construction Management Plan Submittal Requirements
Family Daycare
Fence Regulations
Historical Commission Review Process
Home Occupation
Lot Line Adjustment Submittal Requirements
New Development Climate Action Plan Checklist
New Development Construction Site BMPs
One-Story Residential Design Review Submittal Requirements
Parking Standards Exhibit A
Preliminary Project Review Submittal Requirements
R1-10 Minimum Subdivision Requirements
R1-10 Single-Family Residential District Regulations
R1-S Single-Story Overlay District
Signs on Private Property
Signs on Public Property
Sign Review Submittal Requirements
Storage In Yards Requirements
Tentative Map Submittal Requirements
Two-Story Residential Design Review Submittal Requirements
Use Permit Submittal Requirements
Variance (Residential) Submittal Requirements
Water Efficient Landscape Requirements
Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and Appendices
Wireless Facility Submittal Requirements
Zoning Change, General Plan or Code Amendment Submittal Requirements

34 HANDOUTS

EXHIBIT 1.2 REVISIONS TO DESIGN GUIDELINES

REVISE for clarification and consistency.

- Combine Sections 4 (Mixed Commercial District, Zones CD/R3 and CD) and 5 (First Street District, Zones CD/R3 and CRS) into the Perimeter District. These two chapters are practically identical, but written in different words.

MOVE Required Findings to front of document.

REPLACE

- Three repetitive INTENT sidebars with just one.
- Page numbers with section numbers. Page numbers change.
- “Second” story to “upper” story for future flexibility.
- Under Applicability: “The guidelines are in addition to and subordinate to the zoning regulations.” with “Design Guidelines are in addition to and support zoning requirements.”

ADD

- Purpose
- How to Use
- Checklist
- Zone designations for each district
- Links for future online interactive version
- “clear” to requirement for 60% transparent glazing (“Transparent” glass could be tinted. Currently section 3.2.3 g says: “Keep all window glazing transparent. Avoid tinted glass... “)
- Italicized words to Findings: “Exterior materials, finishes and colors convey *high* quality, integrity, permanence and durability and *serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass*. Materials *are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and the downtown village*, and are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.

DELETE

- References to variances. Let’s not encourage them.
- References to setbacks and front module widths. Too confusing because they are zone-dependent, not district dependent. Applicant should refer to zoning code.

TBD

- Include additional photographs of examples of THIS is what we want, NOT THAT.
- Determine a consistent map representation that make zones clear.
- Dimensions for courtyards and paseos are specified in the Design Guidelines, but should be in the zoning code.
- Revise to reflect approved changes from other subcommittee recommendations.

EXHIBIT 1.3 DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLISTS (DERIVED FROM DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES)

In an online document system, links would be provided to DG sections and zoning codes.

The applicant shall provide details (method TBD by staff, e.g., callout on architectural drawings) of the specific elements that qualify for each item checked.

For any items not checked, applicant shall explain why and provide possible mitigation.

Section 1 INTENT (applies to all districts/zones in the downtown triangle)

Does the project meet the intent of the Design Guidelines?

- Support and enhance the unique Los Altos Downtown Village Character.
 - Maintain and enhance an attractive Downtown pedestrian environment.
 - Provide a mix of uses to meet the needs of community residents and visitors.
 - Encourage increased Downtown vitality with additional shops, restaurants, offices and residences.
 - Encourage creative design and architectural diversity.
 - Encourage appropriate historic preservation.
 - Encourage sustainable design and development including use of EV chargers, solar, and other “green” building solutions.
 - Establish a strong sense of entry at Downtown gateways.
 - Provide adequate, attractive and convenient public parking.
 - Encourage the maintenance and upgrading of uses, properties and signage.
 - Encourage signage appropriate to the Downtown Village scale and Character.
 - Implement the Los Altos Downtown Design Plan.
-

Section 2 VILLAGE CHARACTER (applies to all districts/zones in the downtown triangle)

Does the project provide

- Landscaping and amenity buffers between pedestrians and parked cars.
- Diversity in awnings, signage and lighting.
- Façade setbacks and outdoor seating.
- Visually interesting entries with natural materials.
- Variety of building forms.
- Human scale entries, vestibules, windows, signage, awnings, details and landscape.
- Upper floor entries on street front.
- Larger buildings divided into village scale modules according to zoning codes.

Section 3 DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT (CRS & CRS/OAD ZONES)

Section 3.1 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Does the project provide uses and activities to enhance Downtown?

- Upper floor offices and/or residences
- Courtyards and/or paseos
- Opportunities for active evening uses
- Landscaping and open space
 - Pedestrian frontages accommodate special paving and landscaping
 - Textured paving adjacent to sidewalks
 - Landscaping at tree wells
 - Fountains and public art
 - Benches, shade, lighting and other pedestrian amenities
- Pedestrian safety
 - Visual clues to alert drivers that pedestrians have right of way
 - No obstructions at crossing points that could limit views of traffic and pedestrians
 - Locate driveway or loading areas away from main pedestrian routes
- Trash enclosures and private parking areas
 - Integrate trash enclosures into building
 - Low walls and landscaping for parking adjacent to streets and pedestrian walkways

Section 3.2 ARCHITECTURE

Does the project reinforce the existing downtown framework, scale and character?

- Maintain storefront modules according to zoning codes.
- Segment larger buildings into smaller components
- Create continuous building frontages while avoiding blank walls along sidewalks and paseos
- Create diversity sensitive to adjacent development, while encouraging traditional styles adapted to current needs
- Design buildings as a whole unit with architectural integrity and continuity, while using details authentic to the style
- Enhance village character and pedestrian scale with varied storefronts, landscaping and paving
- Preserve historic structures and worthy elements of existing buildings
- Provide entry vestibules in a variety of shapes with special paving and wood doors
- Use human-scale awnings and canopies at windows and entries
- Provide cornices and building tops consistent with architectural style
- Provide special entry features for buildings at street corners
- Emphasize entries and display windows, making them open and inviting

- Utilize natural materials like wood, real stone and brick
- Enhance pedestrian experience with interesting details appropriate to architectural style
- Provide special storefront and façade lighting
- Design upper floor facades to complement streetscape and village character, relating entries and detail to street level
- Use operable windows in traditional styles, recessed at least 3 inches from wall face
- Design entries and facades facing parking lots that are compatible with parking plazas
- Integrate utilities and building services into overall building design
- Conceal rooftop mechanical equipment from public view from street or adjacent buildings
- Design larger structures to be sensitive to the unique scale and character of the downtown
- Provide special design treatment for visible sidewalls of structures that are taller than their immediate neighbors
- Design and detail parking structures to complement downtown’s village scale and character
 - No parking ingress or egress from Main Street or State Street
 - Provide below grade parking wherever possible
 - Provide commercial uses on ground floors facing pedestrian streets and walkways
 - Provide landscape strips along all edges that do not have active commercial frontages
 - Integrate extensive landscaping into the parking structure edges and entries
 - Integrate pedestrian entries with adjacent commercial uses
 - Provide secondary ground floor pedestrian entries when the structure is adjacent to commercial core service alleys containing rear shop entries or paseo entries
 - Design parking structures to be visually compatible with other commercial buildings
- Reinforce a sense of entry at downtown gateways, as identified on [map](#)

Section 3.3 SIGNAGE

Each sign will be reviewed in the context of project architecture and site. (See [Chapter ????](#) of the Los Altos Zoning Ordinance.)

- Select signs appropriate to pedestrian scale, oriented to pedestrians rather than motorists
- Limit information on signs
- Place signs within a “signable area” that is flat, not containing doors or windows, in proportion to façade, not exceeding 15% of building façade.
- Use materials that project slightly from the building face
- Light signs at night
- Conceal sign and lighting raceways and other connections
- Keep letter heights to 12 inches or less (18 inches on San Antonio Road)
- Relate sign colors to building colors
- Awning signs: Place for easy visibility with a slope of at least 2:1. Avoid backlit awnings
- Window signs: Limit to maximum of 25% of any individual window and an aggregate area of no

more than 10% of all ground floor windows on any building face. Max letter height is 10 inches

- Projecting signs: No more than one/business frontage, projecting no more than 36 inches from building face, max size of 5 square feet. Location should be below first floor ceiling line or no more than 14 feet above the side walk, with minimum 8-foot clearance to sidewalk.
- Hanging signs: No more than one per business, max size 3 square feet, minimum 8-foot clearance to sidewalk.
- Plaque signs: Locate only on wall surfaces adjacent to entries.
- Ground signs: Considered on case-by-case basis, primarily along San Antonio Road, within 10 feet of property line, no larger than 5 feet by 5 feet.
- Free-standing signs: Base, vertical supports and crossbars must fit within rectangle no larger than 6 feet high by 3 feet wide.

Section 4 PERIMETER DISTRICT (CRS, CD & CD/R3 ZONES)

Section 4.1 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Provide underground parking where possible. Minimize parking impact on pedestrian circulation and pedestrian environment.

- For all parking areas:
 - Provide access to parking from passages and less-traveled pedestrian routes whenever possible.
 - Distinguish the parking surface from adjacent sidewalk and pedestrian paving with different textures and/or colors.
 - Limit the width of parking access drives as much as possible.
 - Do not create perpendicular parking spaces that enable cars to drive directly into them from a street driveway or ramp.
- For surface parking:
 - Create landscape buffers between parking and sidewalks/pedestrian areas. Minimum setback is 5 feet. Buffers may include trees, where possible, or arcades and planters.
 - Provide pedestrian links between street front sidewalks and building entries.
 - For larger buildings with set-back entries or rear entries facing a parking lot, create a strong sidewalk connection from the street to the entry, with landscaping on both sides.
 - Use porous textured paving materials that minimize water runoff on all parking surfaces.
- Integrate ground floor uses with the streetscape.
- Observe setbacks specified in zoning code. Residential stairways and entry porches may encroach into this setback up to the property line.

Section 4.2 ARCHITECTURE

Does the project reinforce the existing downtown framework, scale and character?

- Provide for mixed use now and in future
- Divide long facades into smaller modules, according to zoning codes, by
 - Separating structures surrounding a courtyard

- Indenting courtyards ([See 3.2.1b](#))
 - Changing horizontal or vertical plane
 - Creating projections or recesses
 - Varying cornice or roof lines
 - Providing distinctive entries
 - Locate primary entry on main street
 - Vary building heights
 - Use sloped roofs where possible
 - Design as much building frontage along streets to screen parking lots
 - Ensure that architectural style and details are consistent on all sides of structure
 - Emphasize individual windows or small window groups on upper levels.
 - Use vertical window proportions
 - Avoid horizontal ribbon windows
 - Recess windows a minimum of 3 inches from face of exterior walls
 - Provide upper floor balconies and decks where possible
 - Incorporate substantial architectural details in the design, consistent with style of building
 - Design taller buildings to relate to smaller downtown buildings nearby.
 - Create buildings that blend with downtown streets and are part of village environment
-

Section 4.3 LANDSCAPE

- TBD
-

Section 4.4.1 GROUND SIGNS

- Place ground signs at appropriate locations.
 - Limit information on signs to primary business ID and address number.
 - Ensure multi-tenant information has same background color and type style.
 - Ensure visibility from passing vehicles, within 10 feet of front property line.
 - Limit size, including base, to vertical rectangle no larger than 5 ft. by 5 ft.
 - Use approved lighting and materials.
-

Section 4.4.2 FREESTANDING SIGNS

- Limit freestanding signs to a single tenant
- Limit size, including base, supports and crossbars to vertical rectangle no larger than 6 ft. x 3 ft.
- Used approved lighting and materials.

EXHIBIT 1.4 PEDESTRIAN GUIDELINES

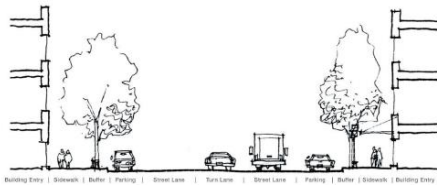
Example: City of Powell, Ohio (population 12,237) Pedestrian Scale Design Guidelines
 Adopted by Ordinance 2009-27; November 4, 2009

A simple 10-page document focused on the essentials of creating a pedestrian friendly environment, with lots of illustrative diagrams and photos.

http://www.cityofpowell.us/documents/Development_Docs/City%20of%20Powell%20Pedestrian%20Scale%20Design%20Guidelines.pdf

Pedestrian Friendly

An area or neighborhood designed to encourage and support pedestrian traffic.
 Pedestrian: A person traveling on foot; a walker.
 Friendly: 1. favorably disposed, inclined to approve, help, or support. 2. easy to understand or use.

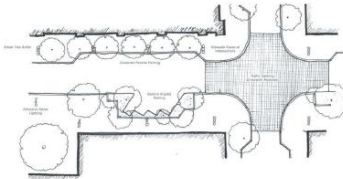


Pedestrian Friendly Zones: Pedestrian friendly zones are defined primarily by three things:

1. The destinations in the pedestrian friendly area must be within walking distance from residences or vehicular collection points. Essentially, the pedestrian must be able to arrive in the area, and be on foot.
2. The combination of routes and destinations throughout the area must be safe and supportive (friendly) to pedestrians. The pedestrian must feel comfortable walking from one place to the next and then ultimately back to where they entered the area.
3. The area should be attractive to pedestrians. Once they have arrived and are presented with the functional requirements of safe and manageably walkable routes, the finishing touches are needed to encourage the pedestrian to actually walk.

Circulation

The path of movement conceived as the perceptual thread that links the spaces of a building, or any series of interior or exterior spaces together. A vehicle requires a path with smooth contours that reflect its turning radius; however, the width of the path can be tailored tightly to its dimensions. Pedestrians can tolerate abrupt changes in direction, but require a greater volume of space relative to their body.



This sample block plan demonstrates successful integration of vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes.



Circulation and Sidewalks: As the primary means of pedestrian circulation, sidewalks are an important part of pedestrian friendly design. Sidewalks should be continuous from block to block and neighborhood to neighborhood. They should provide a clear and direct route and be wide enough to comfortably accommodate expected traffic levels and the street furniture that enhance pedestrian oriented areas.

Circulation and Intersections: Pedestrian friendly intersections should have a turning radius of 5 to 10 feet. A tighter radius makes turning vehicles more aware of pedestrians than large sweeping turns where cars barely need to slow down. Narrow turns also reduce the distance of street that the pedestrian must cross.

Circulation and Crosswalks: All crosswalks should be well marked and well lit. Crosswalk markings vary and can include crosswalk signs, unique paving, raised crosswalks, sidewalks that flare into



Site Planning

The organizational stage of the design process that involves an analysis of composition and placement of a building within its surrounding environment.



Above: Planning diagrams of the same site; left depicting vehicular based planning, middle showing vehicles accommodated in a pedestrian area, and right strongly pedestrian based traffic. Diagrams by P. Calhoun, The New American Metropolitan.



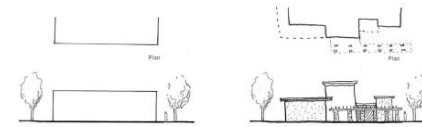
Site Planning and Context: A building should participate with the language of its environment. More importantly, successful pedestrian friendly buildings should maintain strong contextual elements in order to contribute to the "sense of place" of a particular city, region, or area. By continuing the quality and the character of its surroundings, the building facilitates the continuity of the vernacular style.



Site Planning and Connectivity: Good vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation ensures connectivity to and from the building, while accommodating successful links of the entire urban fabric. Sidewalks, walkways, intersections, crosswalks, signage, landscaping, and lighting should be considered from a master site planning scale in order to fully understand the building's impact on the surrounding area. Discontinued sidewalks and bike paths are just as pedestrian un-friendly as not having any of these amenities.

Massing

The three-dimensional volume of a building, with an understanding of its overall impression of weight, density, and bulk.



Above: Diagrams depicting massing based on a vehicular scale (left) and massing based on a pedestrian scale (right).



Massing and the Human Scale: Pedestrian oriented massing should reflect the human scale within its overall composition. The interplay of solid and void can be used to help break down the general volume of the building and relate it back to human proportion and scale. Additionally, window size and placement can help facilitate the scalar difference from the overall building massing and the pedestrian.



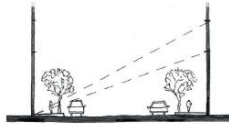
Massing and the Ground Level: Irregularities in the design of a facade are important to break down massing, especially on the ground level where a pedestrian interacts with the building. Composition pertaining to columns, doorways, arches, awnings, niches, corners, covered walkways, and other details is as important as the overall building itself. These items provide a varied visual stimulus and further break down the building's massing to keep the pedestrian engaged within his / her surroundings.

Proportion

The proper or harmonious relation of one part to another or to the whole with respect to spatial quality. Proportional theories have been prevalent throughout architectural history, and remain a guiding force in design. Renaissance architect Alberti called beauty, "the harmony of all parts in relation to one another" and thus analogous to proportion.



A figure ground study of downtown Los Angeles (left) and Irvine California (right) shows how the proportions of city blocks affect walkability.



A street section showing common street width to building height ratios that create visual enclosure.

Proportion and Block Length: New developments should utilize short to medium length blocks. A higher proportion of intersections along a roadway creates more opportunities for pedestrians to cross streets, slows traffic, and provides more relief to the pedestrian than long uninterrupted blocks. Blocks 300 to 500 feet are good for pedestrians. Blocks over 600 feet should not be considered pedestrian oriented.

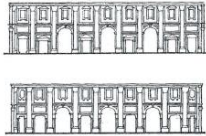
Proportion and Street Oriented Buildings: The ratio of building height to street width is important for creating visual enclosure for pedestrians. Visual enclosure occurs when bordering buildings on a street occupy most of a pedestrian's cone of vision. Successful visual enclosure creates an "outdoor room" that the pedestrian occupies.



Visual Enclosure.

Rhythm

Movement characterized by a patterned repetition or alternation of formal elements or motifs in the same or a modified form. (F. Ching)



Above: Rhythm diagrams depicting repetitive moments in a building's facade. Diagrams by F. Ching, Architecture: Form, Space and Order.

Rhythm and Repetition: Most buildings incorporate elements that are repetitive by nature. Beams and columns create modules of space that are perceived as rhythmic. Likewise, repetitive elements on the exterior of a building, such as window and door spacing, create rhythmic components that are easily read by a pedestrian. Rhythmic pattern alludes to continuity and is vital for pedestrian life.

Vertical vs. Horizontal Rhythm: Most pedestrian friendly buildings incorporate vertical elements or rhythms along the ground floor of the facade. Horizontal rhythms tend to represent a long expanse, leaving the pedestrian feeling overwhelmed with large distance to travel. A better perspective for eye-level is short and staccato vertical elements, such as columns or window framing, that move the pedestrian from "column to column" and keep them engaged with the building's rhythm.



Horizontal Rhythm.



Detail

A small elaborated element of a work of art, craft, or design. "Details are much more than subordinate elements; they can be regarded as the minimal units of signification in the architectural production of meanings." --Marco Frascari

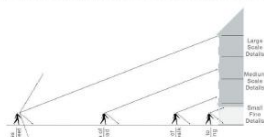


1. The majority of the facade is visible and seen as a whole. Most details are seen primarily as a whole.

2. The facade is seen only in fragments. Individual elements are observed and individual are more clearly expressed.

3. Only a small area of the facade is visible. The points of materials are visible and details are easily read.

4. Only an individual element is visible. The texture of materials and how built are well revealed.



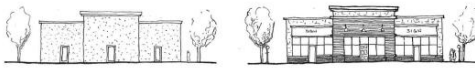
A pedestrian's view of a building is greatly reduced as they move closer to the building, but the ability to perceive detail is increased.

Detail and Architecture: Buildings in pedestrian oriented areas are experienced more intimately than buildings in higher speed car oriented areas. At close range and low speed, the pedestrian has time to admire rich textures, fine materials and subtle variations in design. This experience can also extend into the building through the transparency of the entry and display windows along the elevation. Pedestrian friendly buildings should provide these kinds of details for by passers.

Detail and Street Furniture: As an important part of walkable neighborhoods, the design of street furniture should also enrich the pedestrian experience. Decorative lamp posts, bollards, tree grates, benches, bike racks, and even parking meters add interest and approachability in pedestrian zones. Many of these items are necessary for legal, maintenance, or safety reasons so it requires only a little extra effort to detail them so that they become an asset as well as a

Materiality

The concept of, or applied use of, various materials or substances in the medium of building.



Above: Different material qualities as depicted on the same building.

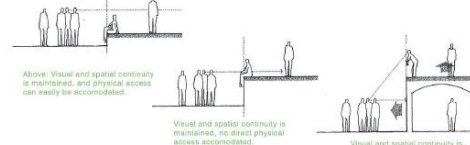


Materiality and the Pedestrian: Materiality gives a pedestrian tactile experience of the building's facade and streetscape. Weight and scale are perceived differently due to light and sound absorption, therefore, texture and color affect the overall perception of the building's facade. Materiality also adds depth to how a building is perceived: from afar through a visual understanding of form and color, and from closer inspection through texture and grain.

Materiality and External Elements: Humans are corporal creatures, relying on all of their senses to experience the world. Material differentiation can also be introduced through signage, landscaping,

Transparency

The degree of enclosure and openness from one space to the next, implying a visual connectivity and/or an interchange of flow of space.



Above: Visual and spatial continuity is maintained, and physical access can easily be accommodated.

Visual and spatial continuity is maintained, no direct physical access accommodated.

Visual and spatial continuity is disrupted, no connection to the building from ground level.

Diagrams by F. Ching, Architecture: Form, Space and Order.



No visual continuity into the building.



Transparency and the Ground Floor: The ground floor facade should be the single most activated interface between city and building. Open and welcoming buildings bring with them a sense of security and accessibility that are important qualities for successful pedestrian life. Views into and out of a building visually connects the building with the pedestrian and the surrounding environment.

Transparency and Exterior Enclosures: Transparency into a building can be generated in a number of ways. Large doors and windows maintain visual connectivity, while openings within the building's overall mass, such as entry courts, create pockets of exterior space that open the building up even further. This visual and physical continuity extends the building's program to its environment and generates a sense of an exterior enclosure or "outdoor room."

Transparency and Programming: Pedestrian

EXHIBIT 1.5 EXAMPLE OF DETAILED ILLUSTRATIONS

http://m.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/Community%20Development/page/429/downtown_land_use_plans_for_website_revised.pdf

Downtown Land Use and Economic Revitalization Plans 12-18-13

Page 8: “The other major effort undertaken ... was the establishment of form-based zoning for all commercial districts in the Downtown triangle, and specifically the CD/R3 zoning for First Street.”

Per Zach Dahl: “The use of design review findings, removal of lot coverage and floor area limits, and the simplification of use definitions in each zone district were intended to move Los Altos toward a more form based approach to zoning that was less prescriptive. But I wouldn’t say that Los Altos is using purely form based zoning because we still have parking requirements, setbacks and other site standards.”

Whether or not we apply pure form-based zoning (<http://formbasedcodes.org/definition>) or a hybrid methodology, it would be beneficial to incorporate explicit illustrations in codes and guidelines.

Example from Benicia, page 4-6:

<http://formbasedcodes.org/content/uploads/2014/02/benicia-downtown-mixed-use-master-plan.pdf>

Chapter 4: Form-Based Code

Town Core (TC) Standards

Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (RTL)
- Building Area

Building Placement		
Build-to Line (Distance from Property Line)		
Front	0'	A
Side Street	0'	B
Setback (Distance from Property Line)		
Side	0'	C
Rear		
A @ adjacent to NC Zone	8'	D
A @ adjacent to any other Zone	5'	E
Building Form		
Primary Street Façade built to RTL	80% min.*	F
Side Street Façade built to RTL	30% min.*	G
Lot Width	125' max.	H
Lot Depth	100' max.	I
*Front façades must be built to RTL along first 30' from every corner.		
Notes		
All floors must have a primary ground-floor entrance that faces the primary or side street.		
Loading docks, overhead doors, and other service entries are prohibited on street-facing façades.		
Any building over 50' wide must be broken down to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each.		

Use	
Ground Floor	Service, Retail, or Recreation, Education & Public Assembly* J
Upper Floor(s)	Residential or Service* K
*See Table 4.1 for specific uses. Ground floors that face the waterfront shall be nonresidential and shall not include parking, garages, or similar uses.	

Height	
Building Min.	22' L
Building Max.	2.5 stories and 40' M
Max. to Eave/Top of Parapet	35' N
Ancillary Building Max.	2 stories and 25' O
Finish Ground Floor Level	6" max. above sidewalk P
First Floor Ceiling Height	12' min. clear Q
Upper Floor(s) Ceiling Height	8' min. clear R
Notes	
Mansard roof forms are not allowed.	
Any section along the RTL not defined by a building must be defined by a 2' 6" to 4' 6" high fence or stucco or masonry wall.	

4-0

Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan
Opticos Design, Inc.

EXHIBIT 1.6 MAPPING TOOLS

Example from Los Gatos:

http://www2.lynxgis.com/Html5Viewer/Index.html?configBase=http://www2.lynxgis.com/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/Los_Gatos/viewers/LosGatosPublic/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default



Email from the Los Gatos planning manager:

“The Town has had a GIS mapping system for over 15 years and Lynx is the company that maintains and updates technical aspects of the system for us. Other jurisdictions have much more robust GIS capabilities and resources to manage their systems. The Town’s GIS is a work in progress and we continue to try to link various information from existing Town resources to make it more useful for both our staff and citizens. GIS really has nearly unlimited benefits across all departments for storing and displaying a wide range of information and can be queried to pull out specific information for research purposes.

“The main benefits are the various information that you can get in one location which is very useful for staff in various departments, citizens, realtors, developers, and our decision makers. Our staff uses the system for their day to day work answering questions via e-mail, telephone, and at the counter. Additionally, it is used for our public noticing and creating a wide variety of graphics for various projects.”

2. ACCESS/TRANSPARENCY

FINDINGS:

- Currently, the only way to view project plans is through links in the PTC agenda or searching Granicus.
- Few people understand that Granicus is separate from the city website. Thus, using the city web search will not produce any results if the documents are located in Granicus.
- We can and should make it easier for residents to access staff reports and developer submissions so they can provide input at every stage. It's better for everyone if residents offer feedback early in the process vs. waiting until presentation to Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Revise the existing planning page on the city website to include all steps in the process and provide links to relevant documents, e.g.,

Detailed web page with links.

PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW:
Below is a list of projects currently in the planning pipeline with key review dates.

The public is encouraged to participate in the development process by

- Reviewing submitted plans and staff reports (links below)
- Attending Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) meetings
- Attending City Council meetings

Comments on any project—at any stage—should be sent to the [Community Development Director](#).
 Comments made early in the process, before plans are completed, will benefit the community, the city staff and the developer. Public input is also welcome at any of the above meetings.
 To be notified of meetings, go to <http://www.losaltosca.gov/subscribe>

Location	Description	PTC meeting	Council Meeting	Permits Applied	Permits Issued	Documents
999 Fremont	Commercial Design Review, Use Permit and Tentative Subdivision Map for a three-story, mixed-use project with commercial on the first story and five multi-family residential condominiums on the second and third stories.	6/4/15 Recommended for denial	7/28/15			links
995 Fremont		6/18/15 Study Session				links

- B. As a long term goal, provide the means for developers to make submissions online.

3. PROCESS/PROCEDURES

FINDINGS:

- **There has been a lack of adherence to documented community standards in recent developments.**

Our review focused on the following new developments:

- 400 Main Street
- Safeway
- Enchante Hotel
- Packard Foundation
- 100 First Street
- 396 First Street
- 240 Third Street

As shown in *EXHIBIT 3.1*, the Downtown Plans and Design Guidelines were not consistently followed in approving these buildings. In addition, *Exhibit 3.2* indicates that staff Findings for these and other buildings are not specific to each building, but simply the boilerplate requirements from Chapter 14.78 of the Municipal Code and the Downtown Design Guidelines.

Findings establish how the City has evaluated a project, and document a project's conformance to local plans, regulations and other criteria. If legally challenged, the findings help bridge the gap between evidence and decisions and must be supported by substantial evidence in the record. For these reasons, specific project findings are very important when acting on a project.

- **City has limited internal expertise on commercial and multi-family projects, often resulting in "design thrash" as a project goes through the approval process.**

Recent examples include 999 Fremont and 1540 Miramonte.

- **PTC has a broad charter. Commercial and multi-family design expertise varies depending on each commissioner's background and time in office.**

The PTC advises Council on planning and transportation issues including "automobile circulation, pedestrian, bicycle and handicapped access, and public transportation on all public streets, roadways and paths within the city limits of the City of Los Altos. The PTC advises the Council on existing and proposed City policies related to traffic calming and traffic enforcement."

<http://www.losaltosca.gov/planningtransportcommission>

Note that there is no mention of architectural/landscape review in the job description. Though strong in residential design, City staff has limited commercial design experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Build accountability into our processes to ensure that commercial development is consistent with village character and human/pedestrian scale.

- A. Provide detailed checklists for developers at every step of the planning process for consistency and accountability.**

Checklists are a straightforward way to confirm that everyone – developers, staff, commissioners, council members – is in agreement as to standards being met or, when appropriate, variances approved.

The Submittal Requirements document is already in a checklist format, but should be more detailed. (See *EXHIBIT 3.3*.) It should also have links to other documents when the city initiates online documents.

B. Attach the completed Design Guidelines checklist to each staff report.

This will confirm that the guidelines have been read and understood, showing design elements are in sync with community standards.

C. Create a standard template for staff reports.

EXHIBIT 3.4 shows that staff reports vary.

Recognizing that there is a different focus for project reviews by different groups and for different purposes, a standardized format would ensure that all parties – Council, PTC, BPAC, etc. – see the same information at every step of the process.

This will ensure that all requirements are covered in every staff report and reflect the original Submission Requirements.

A proposed template is shown in *EXHIBIT 3.5*.

D. Require an early stage design review for new commercial and multi-family projects and major remodels in the downtown triangle. This design review to be done with consulting professionals having specific expertise, paid for by the developer.

Residential projects go through a design review to protect our neighborhoods. The same detailed focus on architecture and landscape should be required for commercial and multi-family residences, which are typically seen by more people and have a bigger impact on the community.

We are not recommending a sitting commission, committee, or board, since Los Altos does not have a constant stream of commercial development at this time.

We do recommend that a consulting architect and a landscape architect review each project—focused solely on design—in an advisory capacity. This would occur early in the planning cycle, as soon as the applicant has a basic site plan, concept, rough elevations and materials to present. There could be several iterations.

Major benefits:

- Early review focused on quality design is advantageous to all parties. It forestalls “design thrash,” ensures alignment with our plans and guidelines, and closes the gap between expectations and outcomes.
- Using design professionals shifts the conversation from legislating taste (personal opinions) to ensuring predictability in meeting community design standards (codes and guidelines).
- Consulting experts function as a resource for staff, in an advisory capacity, to promote quality aesthetics and harmonious development.
- Architects and developers expect such a review—and are willing to pay for it—because it can save them time and money.
- There is no cost to the city, and the potential exists to save city money.

If Council agrees that this early-stage design review would benefit the city, implementation details would be worked out with our Community Development Director. Specific elements would include:

- Defining a process for selecting a pool of consulting architects and landscape architects.
- Determining what level of changes would require a remodel to go through the design review. We don’t want to create barriers to building refurbishment, but if the exterior of a building is significantly altered, a review would be appropriate.

- Scheduling the design review as early as possible in a way that integrates with the PTC study session.
- Ensuring the process is efficient and worthwhile for all parties.

It should be noted that commercial design review is an established part of best practices in most cities. Some have a sitting board (Palo Alto) while others use consultants (Los Gatos and Mountain View).

EXHIBIT 3.6 describes Los Gatos' use of a single architectural consultant to review a project, providing a balanced and well-informed perspective. A landscape architect would ensure that new development has appropriate aesthetic appeal.

We contacted the community development director in Los Gatos and asked about the commercial design review process. He wrote:

"The use of a Consulting Architect has been effective and has helped the development process be more efficient when it comes to architectural review. ... we don't get a lot of push back from decision makers or applicants which in part probably has to do with the fact that we have been requiring it so long that it is expected, and many other jurisdictions require a similar review.

"We have been using our current Consulting Architect since 2002 and time was dedicated early on in the process by staff and decision makers to ensure that he was familiar with and appreciated the special character of the Town."

E. To ensure that Council-approved DBC recommendations are implemented in a timely way, create a workplan with measurable milestones for each to track progress.

Many committee members are willing to continue their work by aiding staff in implementation.

EXHIBIT 3.1 SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE'S REVIEW OF RECENT BUILDINGS

Lack of adherence to Downtown Design Plan

Page	Section	Says	Buildings
1	Goals	Improve the visual quality of the area and create an attractive pedestrian environment	Safeway, Hotel, 400 Main
3	Special Character	1 & 2 story buildings, parking plazas, give Downtown low density atmosphere	Safeway, Hotel, 400 Main, 396 First, 240 Third
4	Assets	Small town village character, architecturally and historically interesting buildings	Safeway, Hotel, 400 Main, 396 First, 240 Third
7	Design Concepts	Externalize character of the village to increase awareness of downtown character	Safeway, Hotel, 400 Main
10	First Steps	Entries & Edges: appearance consistent with small-scale pedestrian core	Safeway, Hotel, 400 Main
11		Pedestrian Friendly	Hotel, Safeway, 400 Main, 100 First
13	Entries	Will be most unifying if all are variation of strong concept & theme	400 Main, Safeway, 240 Third, 396 First
19		Re plants: Rather than completely blocking motorists views of downtown, ... plants allow filtered views	Safeway, 400 Main, 100 First, Hotel
21	Anchor Stores	Not necessarily large square-footage chains	Safeway
23	Public Space	Form, scale design that accommodates pedestrians.	400 Main, Safeway, 100 First
34	Main & San Antonio Entry	Respond to the presence of City Hall across the street	Hotel
35	First & Main Entry	Development would be expected to continue the established Main Street development patterns... street edge setback & character consistent with adjacent streets. Along Main & First, character should be consistent with that of Main Street...	400 Main, Safeway
39	Parking Garages	Garage elevations at street should be harmonious with pedestrian street environment ... reduce scale of the cave-like vehicle entrance	Safeway

Lack of adherence to Downtown Design Guidelines

Page	Section	Says	Buildings
7	Community Expectations	<p>Community wishes to support & enhance unique character of downtown. Property owners & developers will be expected to fit their projects into that existing fabric with sensitivity to their surroundings, & a recognition that the sum of the whole is more important than any single building or use. Buildings should be seen as unique, identifiable, and distinct from other buildings, but this distinction should be subtle, not dramatic.</p> <p>A high quality of traditional architectural and landscape design is expected with abundant detail carried out in a manner that is authentic to the architectural style selected by the applicant.</p>	400 Main, Safeway, 396 First

Page	Section	Says	Buildings
7	Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support & enhance unique village character ▪ Maintain & enhance attractive pedestrian environment ▪ Provide adequate, attractive & convenient public parking 	Hotel, Safeway, 400 Main, 240 Third
8	Districts	First St District: is more strongly vehicle-oriented than the retail core area.	In fact, it's much narrower than Main
17	Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally & vertically. ▪ Landscaping is generous & inviting. 	400 Main, Safeway
17	Core	Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability	396 First
23	Core	Continue the pattern & scale established by existing buildings	Hotel, 400, Safeway
28	Core	Size store entries and entry door heights to the human figure. Avoid over-scaled, tall entries	400 Main, Safeway
37	Core	Avoid architectural styles & monumental building elements that do not relate to the small human scale of downtown. PHOTO: Don't use large arches.	400 Main, Safeway
65	First St District	Owners of properties & businesses in this district should review guidelines for Core. 50-foot module (width), except for lots in CRS zone.	Safeway, 400 Main, 100 First
65	Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote implementation of downtown design plan ▪ Support & enhance downtown village atmosphere ▪ Respect scale & character of area immediately surrounding existing downtown pedestrian district ▪ Improve visual appeal & pedestrian orientation of downtown 	Safeway, 400 Main, 100 First
66	Pedestrian environment	This district is very much a part of the downtown village. Guidelines allow larger buildings & onsite parking while doing so in a manner that reinforces downtown village scale & character	Safeway, 400 Main, 100 First
67	Integrate w/streetscape	Soft landscaping is required for a minimum of 60% of front setback.	Safeway, 400 Main, Hotel
68	Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design to village scale ▪ Avoid large box-like structures ▪ Keep focal points small in scale ▪ Provide substantial small scale details 	Hotel, 400 Main, Safeway
69	Architecture	Design structures to be compatible with adjacent existing buildings.	400 Main, Safeway, Hotel

EXHIBIT 3.2 BOILERPLATE FINDINGS IN STAFF REPORTS

Findings for all of these buildings – and possibly others – are not specific to the building. Rather, they are the boilerplate requirements from Chapter 14.78 of the Municipal Code and the Downtown Design Guidelines.

- 1 Main
- 400 Main
- 100 First
- 396 First
- 467 First
- Safeway
- 4940 El Camino
- 1540 Miramonte

These example comes from the 9-14-10 council approval of the Enchante Hotel at 1 Main Street:

http://los-altos.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=298&meta_id=19421

1. With regard to Design Review application 10-D-04, the Planning Commission finds in accordance with Chapter 14.78 of the Municipal Code that:
 - A. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the General Plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area;
 - B. The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design; building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically.
 - C. Building elevations have variation and depth and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies;
 - D. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements;
 - E. Landscaping is generous and inviting and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage;
 - F. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions;
 - G. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing; and
 - H. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

EXHIBIT 3.3 PROPOSED REVISIONS TO 12/17/15 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

http://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/Community%20Development/page/3751/commercial_multi-family_design_review_submittal_requirements.pdf

Note: In an online document system, links would be provided to DG sections and zoning codes.



City of Los Altos

Planning Division

(650) 947-2750

Planning@losaltosca.gov

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

COMMERCIAL OR MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN REVIEW

APPLICATION FORM, FEE & REQUIRED MATERIALS

Prior to preparing plans, please review all City Code Zoning requirements, applicable Specific Plan(s) and Design Guidelines. The following is a listing of the minimum requirements for the submittal of plans to the Community Development Department. Applicants should use this as a checklist to ensure completeness of the proposal.

All items are required at time of submittal. The project will not be scheduled for a public meeting until the application has been reviewed by a planner and is deemed complete.

1. **General Application Form**

2. **Filing Fee(s)**

Application	\$ _____
Environmental Review	\$ _____
Other: _____	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Make checks payable to the City of Los Altos. Fees are not refundable.

3. **Public Notification**

Two (2) sets of blank postage paid postcards (Post Office approved size).

Planning staff will determine the required number of postcards in each set.

4. **Materials Board**

a. Initial submittal: Provide color photos on an 8.5" x 11" sheet showing roofing material, siding, applied materials (e.g. stone, brick), trim, etc., and identify manufacturer and product specifications.

b. Once application deemed complete: Provide product samples of proposed materials and colors on an 11" x 17" board and, if necessary, applied material mockups to illustrate the appearance of materials together.

5. **Technical Studies**

Depending on the nature of the project, technical studies, such as a traffic impact assessment, arborist report or acoustical analysis, may be required.

6. [Climate Action Plan Checklist for New Development](#)
7. **Color Renderings and 3D Model**
 - a. Provide a sufficient number of perspective color renderings of the proposed structure, photo simulated within the existing context of the built and natural surroundings, to represent how all elevations of the building will appear at a pedestrian scale/level.
 - b. Provide a digital model (using SketchUp or a similar program) of the proposed development and adjacent buildings within the broader streetscape area that can be presented and manipulated to represent the three dimensional qualities of the proposed building within the existing context of the built and natural surroundings.
8. **Architectural Design Plans** *(see checklist below)*
 - a. Initial submittal: Five (5) full-size sets (24" x 36") and five (5) half-size sets (11" x 17").
 - b. Once application deemed complete: 14 additional half-size sets of plans and a digital copy in .pdf format on a CD, a USB data key or emailed to the project planner.
9. [Completed Design Guidelines Checklist.](#)

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PLANS

1. **Cover Sheet**
 - Vicinity Map (clear and legible)
 - Table of Contents
 - General Project Information (project description, general plan, zoning, property owner, design professionals, etc.)
 - A summary of land development calculations including, but not limited to, site area, lot coverage, setbacks, impervious surfaces, building floor area, parking stalls (required and proposed), and, when appropriate, number of beds, students and/or dining seats
 - Rendering or graphic of proposed project
2. **Site Plan** ($1/8" = 1'$ scale)
 - Subject property showing all property lines, **easements** and adjacent streets
 - Location of all **existing** structures on subject property
 - ~~Location and dimensions of parking, driveway, and loading areas~~
 - Location and dimensions of driveways and off-street parking spaces, interior clear dimensions of garage including stall size, aisle widths, back up distance, curbs, and surfacing materials.**
 - Location and size of handicapped spaces where applicable.**
 - Loading spaces where applicable.**
 - Location, size, type and proposed disposition of all existing trees over four-inches in

diameter

- Landscape areas, walkways, fences, retaining walls, utility areas, and trash facilities
- Public improvements, both existing and proposed, including streets, curbs, gutters, street lighting, street paving and fire hydrants.**
- TBD: Shadow study diagram for upper story elevations, clearly illustrating effect on streets, sidewalks and structures on adjacent properties.

3. **Floor Plans** ($1/4'' = 1'$ scale)

~~Show existing and proposed development~~

- Show all buildings, existing and proposed, including:**
 - dimensioned floor plans;
 - indication of the use of all areas;
 - which buildings (or portions thereof) are to be removed;
 - existing and proposed grades.
- Identify details such as balconies, roof gardens, cabanas, etc.
- ADA compliance**

NOTE: Floor plans for single-story buildings may be shown on the site plan.

4. **Floor Area Calculation Diagram** ($1/8'' = 1'$ scale)

- Gross floor area - measured to outside edge of wall and including all space enclosed by walls (habitable space, non-habitable space, accessory structures, basements)
- Net floor area - excluding all inner courts and/or shaft enclosures (stairwells, elevator shafts, etc)
- Existing floor area of structures to be removed

5. **Building Elevations** ($1/4'' = 1'$ scale)

- Elevations of all sides of all existing buildings to be removed, existing to remain and proposed.**
- Building materials and design details
- Roof pitch
- ~~Roof-mounted equipment~~ **Location and method of screening of roof-mounted mechanical equipment. Note peak height.**
- New signage being proposed
- ~~Height~~ **Building height, including height plane for properties on sloping lots.**
- Specify height for all features proposed for height exemption under code 14.66.240.**
- Color(s)
- Fencing

6. **Building Cross-Sections** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)

Provide at least two (2) cross-sections, taken from the highest ridge, showing existing and proposed grades, finished floor levels, wall plates, and building height – **including ancillary structures that exceed height per 14.66.240** – to existing grade.

7. **Roof Plan** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)

- Roof pitch
- Existing roof to remain and new roof area
- All rooftop mechanical equipment and screening location(s)

8. **Landscape & Lighting Plan** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)

- A conceptual planting plan that identifies all existing and proposed trees and plants
- Color photos of proposed trees, plants and other landscape features
- Hardscape, walkways, fences and retaining walls
- Utility areas and trash facilities
- A calculation showing:
 - Total hardscape area
 - Total softscape area
- Exterior lighting plan**
 - Location.
 - Style of fixtures.
 - Intensity (wattage and type of light source).
 - Height of pole-mounted fixtures

Note: Additional details may be added pending Council's approval of landscape recommendations.

9. **Grading and Drainage Plan** ($\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ scale)

NOTE: The Grading and Drainage Plan shall be prepared by a registered civil engineer or a licensed architect.

- Location and elevation of benchmarks
- Location of all cuts and fills**
- Elevation at street and neighboring property lines
- Pad elevation **for all buildings.**
- Finished floor elevation
- Tree location(s)
- Lot drainage pattern

- Existing and proposed contours
- Stormwater management measures to retain stormwater on site in accord with the Best Management Practices
- All existing and proposed underground utilities lines, meters and adjacent infrastructure
- Interim erosion control measures**

10. **Construction Management Plan**

Prepare a preliminary construction management plan that identifies anticipated truck routing and staging, construction worker parking plan (on-site and off-site) and pedestrian routing (sidewalk closures, detours, etc.). *See Construction Management Plan handout for more specific direction.*

11. **Streetscape Elevation**

Render proposed structure(s) in relation to development on adjoining properties. In the case of a corner lot, a streetscape of each street is required. **Include all features where height exemption under 14.66.240 is claimed.**

12. **The use of both passive and active solar energy measures is a high priority with the City. Each proposal must be designed to maximize such measures to include the pre-plumbing and installation of solar collectors, window locations and building siting to maximize natural conditions, and proper use of roof overhangs. A written statement must accompany the application that clearly describes these measures.**

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

1. **Mailed Notices** – All properties within 500 feet of the project site will receive a mailed notice of the public meeting 10-14 days before the meeting. The Planning Division will provide an area map showing all properties within a 500-foot radius. The applicant must provide two sets of blank stamped postcards (post office approved size) for all properties within the 500-foot radius.

NOTE: Notification for Commercial Districts, by City Council resolution, requires notification of all commercial tenants within the 500-foot radius area. The applicant is responsible for providing a name and address list of all commercial businesses within the notification area. Additional blank stamped postcards for this address list will also be required

2. **On-Site Posting Requirement** – In addition to the mailed notices, a public notice billboard (four feet by six feet) with color renderings of the project will need to be installed at the project site at least 10 days prior to the first public meeting date. *See Public Notice Billboard handout for more specific direction.*
3. **Story Poles** – All new development projects are required to install story poles on the site at least two weeks prior to the first public meeting. *See Story Pole handout for more specific direction.*

CITY ACTION

The project will be reviewed at public meetings before the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC), the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and the City Council (CC). BPAC will hold a public meeting to provide a recommendation regarding the project's bicycle and pedestrian amenities. The PTC will hold a public meeting to review and provide a recommendation on all components of the project, and the City Council will review and take a final action on the project.

In order to approve the project, the PTC and CC must make specific findings on each of the following issues:

1. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the Los Altos General Plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area.
2. The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.
3. Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
4. Exterior materials and finishes convey **high** quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.
5. Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.
6. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.
7. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view. Screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing **and meets height limits.**
8. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

EXHIBIT 3.4 INCONSISTENT STAFF REPORTS

STUDY SESSION FORMATS

6-18-15 PTC study session 999 Fremont



DATE: June 18, 2015
AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Planning and Transportation Commission
FROM: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager
SUBJECT: Study Session for 995 (981-991) Fremont Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to the applicant

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a pre-application design review, study session for a mixed-use project at 995 Fremont Avenue. The purpose of the study session is to provide early design input from the Planning and Transportation Commission.

The project combines several parcels into a 28,584-square-foot site with contiguous frontage on Fremont Avenue and secondary frontage on A Street and B Street. The project proposes approximately 6,900 square feet of commercial area and 20 multiple-family condominiums.

The design concept is to develop a single building that is broken down into what appears as separate buildings each with its own architecture. The project uses a uniform Tuscan style tile roof, cement plaster siding, wood and iron and masonry details within each architectural expression. The commercial spaces have frontage on Fremont Avenue and A Street. A hidden courtyard provides secondary access to the commercial space and access to the residential units on the second and third stories. Most of the commercial parking spaces are located at-grade and accessed from a driveway on Fremont Avenue and B Street. The remaining parking is located in a below-grade parking garage accessed from B Street.

DISCUSSION

Zoning

The project appears to meet the required building setbacks with the building face set to the back of sidewalk along Fremont Avenue and A Street and with an approximately 20 foot rear set back from B Street. The project exceeds the 30-foot height limit to the top of the flat roof deck by approximately two feet. The Code uses the average, roof height measurement only for sloping gable, hip or gambrel roofs. The project appears to provide the required parking spaces with 71 parking spaces, where the code requires 67 spaces.

10-15-15 PTC study session 1540 Miramonte



DATE: October 15, 2015
AGENDA ITEM # 1

TO: Planning and Transportation Commission
FROM: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager
SUBJECT: Study Session for 1540 Miramonte Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to the applicant

PROJECT DESCRIPTION


This is a pre-application design review, study session for a mixed-use project at 1540 Miramonte Avenue. The purpose of the study session is to provide early design input from the Planning and Transportation Commission.

The project is located in the Loyola Corners Specific Plan area at the corner of Miramonte Avenue and B Street. The project proposes to replace an automobile service station with a mixed-use building with approximately 1,300 square feet of retail area at the ground level and four apartments at the second story.


GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Neighborhood Commercial
ZONING: CN (Commercial Neighborhood)
LC/SPZ (Loyola Corners Specific Plan)
PARCEL SIZE: 0.37 acres (13,400 square feet)
MATERIALS: Standing seam metal roof, shiplap and tongue-and-groove wood siding, re-sawn plywood, wood trim

	Existing	Proposed	Required/Allowed
SETBACKS:			
Front (B Street)	48 feet	10 feet	0 feet
Rear	58 feet	76 feet	20 feet
Exterior Side (Miramonte)	38 feet (to building)	6 feet	0 feet
Right Side	2 feet	5 feet	0 feet
HEIGHT:	15 feet	25 feet ¹	30 feet
PARKING:	10 spaces	16 spaces	14 spaces

STUDY SESSION WITH PTC

	DATE: October 15, 2015 AGENDA ITEM # 1																																
<p>TO: Planning and Transportation Commission</p> <p>FROM: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager</p> <p>SUBJECT: Study Session for 1540 Miramonte Avenue</p>																																	
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Provide direction to the applicant</p>																																	
<p>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</p> <p>This is a pre-application design review, study session for a mixed-use project at 1540 Miramonte Avenue. The purpose of the study session is to provide early design input from the Planning and Transportation Commission.</p> <p>The project is located in the Loyola Corners Specific Plan area at the corner of Miramonte Avenue and B Street. The project proposes to replace an automobile service station with a mixed-use building with approximately 1,300 square feet of retail area at the ground level and four apartments at the second story.</p> <p>GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Neighborhood Commercial ZONING: CN (Commercial Neighborhood) LC/SPZ (Loyola Corners Specific Plan) PARCEL SIZE: 0.37 acres (13,400 square feet) MATERIALS: Standing seam metal roof, shiplap and tongue-and-groove wood siding, re-sawn plywood, wood trim</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Existing</th> <th>Proposed</th> <th>Required/Allowed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SETBACKS:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Front (B Street)</td> <td>48 feet</td> <td>10 feet</td> <td>0 feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rear</td> <td>58 feet</td> <td>76 feet</td> <td>20 feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exterior Side (Miramonte)</td> <td>38 feet (to building)</td> <td>6 feet</td> <td>0 feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Right Side</td> <td>2 feet</td> <td>5 feet</td> <td>0 feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HEIGHT:</td> <td>15 feet</td> <td>25 feet¹</td> <td>30 feet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PARKING:</td> <td>10 spaces</td> <td>16 spaces</td> <td>14 spaces</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Existing	Proposed	Required/Allowed	SETBACKS:				Front (B Street)	48 feet	10 feet	0 feet	Rear	58 feet	76 feet	20 feet	Exterior Side (Miramonte)	38 feet (to building)	6 feet	0 feet	Right Side	2 feet	5 feet	0 feet	HEIGHT:	15 feet	25 feet ¹	30 feet	PARKING:	10 spaces	16 spaces	14 spaces
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HEIGHT:	15 feet	25 feet ¹	30 feet																														
PARKING:	10 spaces	16 spaces	14 spaces																														

REPORT TO PTC

	DATE: January 21, 2016 AGENDA ITEM # 2
<p>TO: Planning and Transportation Commission</p> <p>FROM: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager</p> <p>SUBJECT: 15-D-07, 15-UP-03—1540 Miramonte Avenue</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>Recommend approval of Design and Use Permit applications 15-D-07, 15-UP-03 to the City Council subject to the findings and conditions</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>This is the reconsideration of a design review and use permit application for a project at 1540 Miramonte Avenue. The project is for a mixed-use building with 1,466 square feet of retail commercial space at the ground level and four residential apartments at the second story.</p> <p>On December 17, 2015, the Planning and Transportation Commission held a public hearing and continued its review subject to the following direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more articulation and architectural detail in the building design; • Address the clock tower element to define it better; • Provide more contrast in the building materials; • Make the upper story appear more residential; • Reduce the bulk by adding windows on the north and south second story elevations; • Add a street tree on B Street and a Chinese Pistache on Miramonte Avenue; • Make the building openings on the rear (west) building elevation more symmetrical; • Provide actual material samples such as the stained wood siding; • Add more landscape where possible such as in the parking lot; • Add images of landscaping into the plans; • Add more landscaping at the base of the building; and • Consider comingling restrooms for the retail areas for a more commercial floor plan potential. 	

REPORT TO COUNCIL


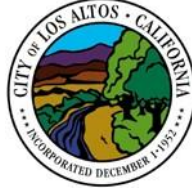
	CITY OF LOS ALTOS CITY COUNCIL MEETING February 23, 2016	DISCUSSION ITEMS Agenda Item # 6
<p>SUBJECT: Approve design review and use permit applications for 1540 Miramonte Avenue subject to the listed findings and conditions</p>		
<p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>This is a design review and use permit application for a project at 1540 Miramonte Avenue. The project is for a two-story, mixed-use building with 1,466 square feet of retail commercial space at the ground level and four residential apartments at the second story. Design review is required for the new building. A use permit is required for the expansion of the building area. The project was submitted prior to the development moratorium for the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Specific Plan area.</p> <p>Following an initial study session on October 15, 2015 and a review by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission on November 4, 2015, the applicant addressed recommendations to modify and add more bicycle racks. The project was reviewed twice by the Planning and Transportation Commission at public hearings on December 17, 2015 and January 21, 2016, with the applicant addressing many of the Commission's recommendations. At its January 21, 2016 meeting, the Planning and Transportation Commission unanimously recommended approval of the project to the City Council subject to the following direction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the landscape plans on the Miramonte Avenue and B Street frontages to reflect the street tree types shown in the Loyola Corners Concept Plan; 2. Revise the landscape plan on the B Street frontage to show the expanded planter on the street side of the sidewalk as per the Loyola Corners Concept Plan; 3. Omit the signage on the elevator tower; 4. Revise the privacy walls on the north side of the building by extending them if possible and/or using alternative materials for them; 5. Consider adding a clearstory window in the bedroom at the northwest corner of the building; and 6. Update the renderings to reflect the most recent changes. <p>The Memorandum to the Planning and Transportation Commission and the minutes of the January 21, 2016 meeting are attached as Attachments 2 and 3, respectively.</p> <p>EXISTING POLICY Loyola Corners Neighborhood Specific Plan (adopted in 1990, amended in 1993).</p> <p>On March 24, 2015, the City Council adopted a story pole requirement for commercial, multiple-</p>		

EXHIBIT 3.5 PROPOSED STAFF REPORT TEMPLATE

Based on the staff report for 1540 Miramonte to PTC on 1-21-16 and on 2-23-16 to Council

http://los-altos.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&event_id=268&meta_id=45365



DATE:

AGENDA ITEM #

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT:

RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: xxx

ZONING: xxx

PARCEL SIZE: xxx

MATERIALS: xxx

	Existing	Proposed	Required/Allowed
SETBACKS:			
Front	x feet	x feet	x feet
Rear	x feet	x feet	x feet
Right side	x feet	x feet	x feet
Left side	x feet	7 feet	x feet
HEIGHT:	x feet	x feet	x feet
PARKING:	x spaces	x spaces	x spaces
DENSITY:	x units	x units	x units

BACKGROUND

EXISTING POLICY

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION

DISCUSSION

PUBLIC CONTACT

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION

ALTERNATIVES

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Project plans
2. Submittal Requirements Checklist
3. Design Guidelines Checklist if project is downtown
4. xxxx

FINDINGS: *ALL FINDINGS TO BE LISTED UNDER THE APPROPRIATE TOPIC HEADING. Numbers relate to the Submittal Requirements document.*

4 Materials

5 Technical Studies

- Traffic impact assessment
- Arborist report
- Acoustical analysis
- Other

6 Climate Action Plan Checklist

7 Color renderings and 3D model

8 Architectural Design Plans and Design Guidelines (Refer to checklists on attached Submittal Requirements document. Note any missing or nonconforming items, exemptions and variances.)

PARKING

CONDITIONS

EXHIBIT 3.6 LOS GATOS ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANTS

<http://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13593>

RESOLUTION 2014 -040

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS GOVERNING THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS AND CLARIFYING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT AND RESCINDING RESOLUTION 2002 -25

WHEREAS, the Town of Los Gatos Town Council has determined that there is a need to modify the Town's design review process last adopted in 2002; and

WHEREAS, a goal of the Town is to ensure full public and policy maker consideration of design alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the use of an architectural consultant may assist applicants, Town staff, and decision -makers in achieving architectural excellence in designs submitted to the Town for review; and

WHEREAS, architectural consultants have been used in the past and may be engaged by the Town to review the architecture for fixture development proposals at the expense of project applicants;

WHEREAS, the architectural consultant is qualified to review and critique architecture and may be requested to work with applicants, Town staff and decision makers to provide input on designs which have been submitted to the Town, to answer questions about the submitted design and/ or design alternatives, and otherwise serve as a resource to decision makers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council that the following policies shall govern the architectural review process:

A. The architectural consultant may review plans upon request by Town staff, the Planning Commission and/ or the Town Council and provide input regarding the plan' s consistency with applicable design standards and guidelines, specific plans and the General Plan. Staff reports on projects that have been reviewed by the architectural consultant will include any recommendations or alternatives presented by the architectural consultant, and any alternative, including the original reviewed design, submitted by the applicant.

B. Town staff, the Planning Commission and the Town Council may consider the architectural consultant' s recommendations or alternatives as one of a number of factors used in the consideration of any development project submitted to the Town.

C. Town staff, the Planning Commission and the Town Council may use their independent discretion in evaluating the recommendations of the architectural consultant and may approve any design that meets all applicable Town Design Guidelines, ordinances, specific plans and the General Plan.

D. Whenever possible, the Planning Commission and/ or the Town Council should seek

to resolve design issues that arise during the hearing by crafting motions to deny, continue with direction to revise, or to approve with appropriate conditions. When necessary, the Planning Commission and/ or the Town Council may continue an item to a future meeting and request the presence of the architectural consultant to address specific issues or questions. Any costs associated with the delay and requested presence of the architectural consultant will be paid by the applicant
PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Town Council held on the 16a` day of June, 2014, by the following vote:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES: Marcia Jensen, Diane McNutt, Joe Pirzynski, Barbara Spector, Mayor Steven Leonardis

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

MAYOR OF THE TO OF OS GATOS

LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

ATTEST:

CLERK ADMINISTRATOR THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS

LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

CONCLUSION/OUTCOMES

Putting the above recommendations into practice will:

- Expedite the commercial development process by
 - clearly defining community expectations
 - providing easy checklist to ensure conformance
 - building enforcement and accountability into the process.
- Create more transparency for residents during the multiple phases of the commercial development approval process.
- Improve predictability to ensure there are no more surprises for the developer or residents, while attracting high-quality commercial development.
- Give residents the quality development they deserve.

This work will also further the visioning process leading to a Downtown Plan that specifically defines community needs and expectations.

Such a plan is needed to create a level playing field for developers and to ensure objective decision-making. It will prevent piecemeal approval, project by project, which has given us the negative aspects of First Street.

Council should take whatever steps required for maximum enforceability and timely execution to ensure the vision is implemented.

HEIGHT, BULK, AND MASS & PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE SUBCOMMITTEES

4. HEIGHT, BULK, and MASS

FINDINGS:

- **The maximum allowed building envelope increased significantly after 2010 when zoning changes increased maximum heights and eliminated FARs.**

New maximum envelope ('block of clay') is now 200-300% greater than the prior maximum cubic footage (depending on site dimensions, planned use, and parking solution).

These zoning changes placed new expectations on staff, PTC and Council to negotiate reductions to the proposed mass of buildings and achieve a design that fits the community.
- **Taller buildings constructed to minimum setback along narrow streets with NW/SE orientation create dark shadows and sense of "tunnel."**
 - Distance from building front to building front across Main Street is about 78 feet (11-foot sidewalks and tree wells and 56 feet of street). For State Street, building-to-building is about 65 feet (14 foot sidewalks and 36 foot street). This compares to 35-45 feet on First Street (5-6 foot sidewalks and 22-40 foot street width). (See *EXHIBIT 4.1.*)
 - Eliminating front parking lots and bringing building fronts to minimum setback (current staff policy) will create even more "tunnel" effect.
 - By comparison, few buildings in the CRS zone are built to the lot line along their entire length; many have recessed display windows and/or fronts plus well-articulated entries.
- **"Flexibility" in design and approval demanded by developers, staff, and PTC has not created a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly village that meets community expectations.**
- **Interrelated factors affect community acceptance: height/bulk/mass, human scale, pedestrian experience, landscaping, shadows, views, materials.**

(See *EXHIBIT 4.2*, Analysis of resident feedback with table of recent survey results for each building, and *EXHIBIT 3.1*, Summary of committee's review of recent buildings.)
- **Reducing maximum heights while retaining current form-based zoning will allow larger buildings than could be built prior to 2010, while reducing adverse impacts on other factors and retaining flexibility in design.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. **Amend the height limits for the CD and CD/R3 zones so that commercial and mixed-use structures do not exceed 30 feet in height and entirely residential projects do not exceed 35 feet in height.**

14.44.120 - Height of structures (CD).

No structure shall exceed ~~forty-five (45)~~ **thirty (30)** feet in height. The first story shall have a minimum interior ceiling height of twelve (12) feet to accommodate retail use, and the floor level of the first story shall be no more than one foot above sidewalk level.

14.52.100 - Height of structures (CD/R3).

No structure shall exceed forty-five (45) feet in height. For entirely residential projects, no structure shall exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height. For commercial and mixed-use projects, no structure shall exceed thirty (30) feet in height. Commercial and mixed-use projects that include ground floor commercial floor area shall provide a ground floor with a minimum interior ceiling height of twelve (12) feet.

NOTE: setbacks required in 14.52.060 for CD/R3 already differentiate between “entirely residential projects” – which require “minimum depth of the front yard shall be ten (10) feet....”– and “mixed-use and commercial” – which require “minimum depth of front yards shall be two feet....”

B. Adopt an ordinance establishing a temporary moratorium on new construction in the CD and CD/R3 zones that does not meet the height limits recommended above, pending completion of the process needed to act on and implement the zoning changes.

The committee recognizes that reducing maximum heights would add to the number of non-conforming buildings downtown, although previous Council action has already done so when the method for measuring height was changed following construction (e.g. 160 First Street and 1 Main Street). Objections that making a building non-conforming creates adverse impacts on its value has not prevented owners from making further capital improvements (e.g. installing solar, which required Council approval of a variance for the Harman Building) or gaining Council approval for special uses to expand business offerings (1 Main).

EXHIBIT 4.1 RELATION OF BUILDING HEIGHT TO STREET WIDTH AND PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS

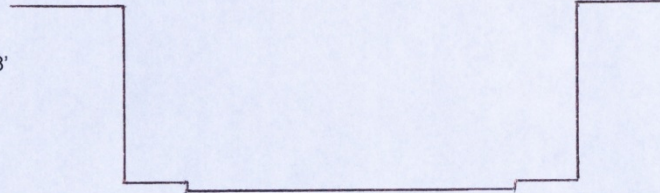
The primary streets of the CD and CD/R3 zones (First, Second, and Third Streets) are considerably narrower than those of the CRS zone (Main and State Streets), contributing to adverse impact of taller buildings.

- Exacerbates the adverse impact of taller buildings in CD and CD/R3 compared to if they were built in CRS (e.g. a building that seems of good scale on Main St. will seem out of scale on First Street, given the narrower street and narrower sidewalks).
- Impacts include adverse shade projection, and potential tunnel effects as narrower rights of way (assuming street parking is retained) currently limit sidewalks to approximately 5 feet.

Please see next page for diagrams.

Representative sketches of street/building cross-sections at maximum build-out under current zoning (excludes height exceptions for roofline, mechanical equipment screening, etc.)

Main Street
Building-to-building: 78'
Street: 56'
Sidewalk: 11'
Setback: 0'
Max. height: 30'
Ratio: 1:2.6



State Street
Building-to-building: 65'
Street: 36'
Sidewalk: 14'
Setback: 0'
Max. height: 30'
Ratio: 1:2.17



First Street
Building-to-building: 50-58'
Street: 40'
Sidewalk: 5'- 8'
Setback: 2'
Max. height: 45'
Ratio: 1:1.2 (at 54')

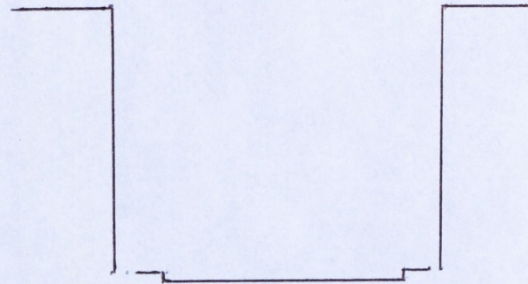


EXHIBIT 4.2 RESIDENT FEEDBACK

Analysis of feedback from recent resident survey: A majority of residents (51%) favor no further development or development not greater than 30 feet/two stories (integrating data from Q 10 and 14 from recent survey)

- 23% want no additional development downtown;
- 28% want no more than 30 feet;
- 33% would allow 3 stories or 45 feet or more;
- 16% have various other, unidentified, opinions.

The data presented in the survey results can be confusing without the additional information that Q14 was asked of all survey participants (n=401), but Q10 was asked ONLY of those who answered Q14 by favoring either of the two specific locations for “Continued redevelopment...” options (n=245).

Q10 thus provided more specific information about the height limits only from those who favored further development.

To integrate the information into a correct statistical interpretation, Q14 results show 23.3% of the total sample (n=401) want “No additional development downtown” and 14.3 % (9.0 + 2.9 + 2.2) had mixed or no opinion.

The remaining 62.6% (32.6 + 30.0) who favored some “Continued redevelopment...” were then asked Q10 regarding height, so the percentage of responses for that question shown must be multiplied by 62.6% to arrive at a correct percentage of the TOTAL survey sample with respect to opinions on additional development height: “Stay the way it is/allow 30 feet...” at $44.7 \times 62.6 = 27.9\%$ and “Allow 45 feet in height...” at $52.8 \times 62.6 = 33.1\%$.

The remaining 2.7% who answered A10 with Mixed opinions, neither, and DK/NA thus need to be added ($2.7 \times 62.6 = 0.17\%$) to the “other opinions” to get a complete picture.

Perceptions of Individual Developments by Mean Score

Source: Godbe Research 2015 Survey

Shown in ranked order

2 = strongly like; 0 = neutral; -2 = strongly dislike

Building	Mean score
242 Second Street (Packard Foundation)	1.10
170 First Street (Safeway)	0.66
1 Main Street (Hotel)	0.54
400 Main Street (Cetrella/Pharmaca)	0.39
240 Third Street (Schwab)	0.34
100 First Street (condos at old Post Office site)	0.19
396 First Street (condos at old Adobe Animal Hospital site)	-0.01

5. HEIGHT EXCEPTIONS PER 14.66.240

FINDINGS:

- **City zoning language and guidelines are outdated and are insufficient to define and limit height exceptions for parapets, chimneys, towers, skylights, penthouses, screening walls, etc. Such features under current code contribute to undesired height.**
 - Lack of uniform instruction on how to measure the allowable heights for such exceptions leads to confusion and inconsistent application of the rule (e.g. to peak or to mid-point of sloped roofs or ??).
 - Current submittal requirements call for cross sections at the “highest ridge” with no call-out of any proposed height exceptions under 14.66.240. These are easily overlooked or receive insufficient attention during design review.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Amend 14.66.240 (A) and (E) to group structures that are related to building design, equipment or mechanical screening separate from other structures (e.g. flag poles and antennae). Make the maximum height for such structures 8 feet instead of 15.**

14.66.240 - Height limitations—Exceptions.

A. Towers, Spires, cupolas, chimneys, flagpoles, radio and television antennas, and transmission towers, except as noted below, may be erected to a height not more than fifteen (15) feet above the height limit prescribed by the regulations for the district in which the site is located provided no such structure shall be used for dwelling purposes or for commercial or advertising purposes.

[B-D omitted]

E. Towers, cupolas, chimneys, ~~completely~~ enclosed penthouses or other similar roof structures for the housing of elevators, stairways, tanks, or electrical or mechanical equipment required to operate and maintain the building, and parapet walls and skylights may project not more than eight feet above the roof and the permitted building height, provided the combined area of all roof structures does not exceed four percent of the gross area of the building roof. However, no tower, cupola, chimney, penthouse or roof structure or any space above the height limit shall be allowed for the purpose of providing additional usable floor space for dwelling, commercial, advertising, retailing, or storage of any type.

NOTE: Recommendation to require all exceptions be called out on Submittal Requirements is in EXHIBIT 3.3.

- B. Remove language in guidelines and plans that encourage towers (Downtown Design Plan p. 11, 22, 35). Direct staff to prepare and add definition for “penthouse” and “tower” to the general definitions at 14.02.070. Specify that penthouse is not a habitable or commercial space but is intended to provide an architecturally pleasing cover to stairwells, elevator equipment, etc.**

14.02.070 - Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter, certain words and phrases used in this chapter are defined as follows:

.....

“Penthouse” means....

....

“Tower” means....

PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

In addition to building height and mass, the pedestrian experience has been negatively affected by:

- insufficient articulation
- narrow and obstructed sidewalks
- poor landscaping
- inadequate building materials
- extensive shadows
- obstructed views

All of these can be mitigated. Specific findings and recommendations follow.

6. ARTICULATION

FINDINGS:

- **Pedestrian experience, human scale, and village character have been negatively affected by insufficient articulation.**
 - Articulation is currently required only for buildings over 75 feet wide, which is too great for human scale in the village environment; downtown core requirement is 25 feet.
 - Staff encourages building to the minimum setback and placing parking in the rear, which exacerbates “tunnel” effect.
 - Lack of articulation in some buildings fails to mitigate height, bulk, and mass.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Amend Design Control to require articulations for every building over 50 feet wide and require changes of plane in the horizontal and vertical aspects.**

14.44.130 – Design Control (CD) and 14.52.110 – Design Control (CD/R3)

B.2. Every building over ~~seventy five (75)~~ **fifty (50)** feet wide should have its perceived height and bulk reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components by:

- i. A change of plane, **effecting changes in both the horizontal and vertical aspects.**
- ii. A projection or recess;
- iii. Varying cornice or roof lines;
- iv. Other similar means

Note: DBC does not recommend applying these requirements to the CRS zone, which, as noted in 14.48.020.C, continues “the pattern and scale established by existing buildings...that express the underlying twenty-five (25) foot frontages originally established....”

- B. Through development requirements and guidelines, encourage variation in building-entrance configuration and other aspects of the front of the building, upper levels, and roofline, to avoid a “tunnel” that would result from having all buildings constructed to the minimum setback. Instruct Staff and PTC to encourage creative articulations at street level rather than building to the minimum setback.**

7. SIDEWALKS

FINDINGS:

- **In much of the CD and CD/R3 zones, it is impossible to walk side-by-side, enjoying a positive walking experience.**
 - Most sidewalks in CD and CD/R3 are 5 feet wide.
 - Signage and utility poles obstruct pedestrian traffic. “Barriers” at the minimum setback (hardscape walls or tall/dense landscaping) reduce usable sidewalk width.
 - Greater consistency in sidewalk width throughout the downtown triangle would encourage pedestrian traffic to flow easily from one street to another and to move beyond the downtown core.
- **Bringing the south end of First Street sidewalks into conformance with those on the north end would improve the visual appeal and pedestrian orientation of the downtown.**

This would allow room for pedestrian traffic and amenities to coexist in areas in front of buildings, encouraging visitors and adding vibrancy to these streets.

- **In a few parcels, modifications to side or rear setbacks that abut public rights of way may be needed to enhance pedestrian safety. For example, 400 Main has no pedestrian walkway on the Pharmaca side to get from rear parking to the entrance, requiring people to walk in the traffic right of way.**

EXHIBIT 7.1 contains excerpts of sidewalk design recommendations from the Federal Highway Administration, National Association of City Transportation Officials, and Americans with Disabilities Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. **Require minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet that is generally clear of all obstructions such as signage and utility poles (consistent with streetscape plan previously implemented for the north end of First Street).**

This may require dedication of approximately 1 foot from the developer as properties are developed. This recommendation should be incorporated in any future streetscape plan for the portion of First Street from Main to San Antonio, but should not be dependent on the development or implementation of such plan.

- B. **Where sidewalks are not more than 6 feet wide, prohibit walls or any obstructing hedges or similar plantings within the first two feet of setback. This is advisable because pedestrians avoid the 24 inch area next to a wall of any height and also avoid 18 inches near the curb. This effectively leaves only 18 inches of a 5-foot wide sidewalk for walking. (See *EXHIBIT 7.2.*)**

- C. Where code currently requires side or rear setback of 2 feet where property adjoins public right of way, change language to require setback of at least 2 feet and as much as 5 feet if needed to create safe pedestrian walkways, supplemented with suitable landscaping. (See below.)

Landscape-only requirements for 2-foot setbacks are appropriate only if there are otherwise safe walkways. This is needed to avoid problems such as have been noted at the north side of 400 Main.

14.44.070 - Side yards (CD). and 14.52.060 – Side yards (CD/R3)

No side yards shall be required, except when the side property line of a site abuts a public street or a public parking plaza, in which case the minimum width of the side yard shall be at least two and as much as five feet as may be needed for pedestrian safety. and shall be landscaped. Landscaping shall be integrated with pedestrian safety requirements.

EXHIBIT 7.1 SIDEWALK GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTED PLANNING

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Chapter 4 - Sidewalk Design Guidelines and Existing Practices

“Sidewalks form the backbone of the pedestrian transportation network.”

4.1 Location Research

Designers and builders are beginning to realize that the standard pedestrian is a myth and that, in reality, sidewalk users are very diverse. However, there remains a need to provide information to designers and builders on ways to develop accessible facilities within the constraints of existing facilities, as well as in new construction.

4.3 Access Characteristics

The design of a sidewalk can be described by a variety of characteristics. This report focuses on sidewalk characteristics that have the greatest impact on accessibility, such as grade and surface type. Other characteristics such as location, type of street, and climate also affect the pedestrian friendliness of a sidewalk but do not directly impact access. Access characteristics directly affect usability of a sidewalk. The amount of attention paid to these details will determine whether a facility is accessible or not. Even mildly difficult features in combination can add up to an inaccessible pathway.

4.3.3 Width

The widths of sidewalks not only affect pedestrian usability but also determine the types of access and other pedestrian elements that can be installed. For example, a 1.525-m (60-in) sidewalk is probably wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic in a residential area, but a much wider sidewalk would be necessary to include amenities such as street furniture or newspaper stands. Design width is defined as the width specification the sidewalk was intended to meet; it extends from the curb or planting strip to any buildings or landscaping that form the opposite borders of the sidewalk. Minimum clearance width is defined as the narrowest point on a sidewalk. An inaccessible minimum clearance width is created when obstacles such as utility poles protrude into the sidewalk and reduce the design width. A reduction in the design width could also create a minimum clearance width.

Although most guidelines require sidewalk design widths to be at least 1.525 m (60 in) wide, larger design widths can accommodate more pedestrians and improve ease of access. The AASHTO Green Book, the Oregon Department of Transportation guidebook, and other guidelines recommend wider design widths in areas with high volumes of pedestrians. The sidewalk width often depends on the type of street. In general, residential streets have narrower sidewalks than commercial streets.

The guidelines and recommendations that were reviewed for minimum clearance width are included in Tables 4-2.1 through 4-2.4 at the end of this chapter. Most of the guidelines reviewed concur with ADAAG, which specifies that the minimum passage width for wheelchairs should be 0.815 m (32 in) at a point and 0.915 m (36 in) continuously (ADAAG, U.S. Access Board, 1991). Additional width is necessary for turning and maneuvering.

The width of the sidewalk is also affected by pedestrian travel tendencies. Pedestrians tend to travel in the center of sidewalks to separate themselves from the rush of traffic and avoid street furniture, vertical obstructions, and other pedestrians entering and exiting buildings. Pedestrians avoid the edge of the sidewalk close to the street because it often contains utility poles, bus shelters, parking meters, sign poles, and other street furniture. Pedestrians also avoid traveling in the 0.610 m (24 in) of the sidewalk close to buildings to avoid retaining walls, street furniture, and fences (OR DOT, 1995). The sidewalk area that pedestrians tend to avoid is referred to as the shy distance. Taking into account the

shy distance, only the center 1.830 m (6 ft) of a 3.050-m (10-ft) sidewalk is used by pedestrians for travel, as shown in Figure 4-7. Thus, the effective width of a sidewalk, not the design width, constitutes the sidewalk area needed to accommodate anticipated levels of pedestrian traffic.

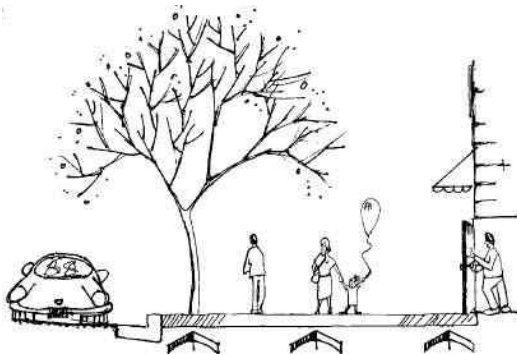


Figure 4-7: Most pedestrians prefer to travel in the center of the sidewalk.

When right-of-way is acquired for sidewalk construction, it is important that adequate width be included to make the facility accessible. If sidewalks are not currently included, the agency responsible for sidewalk construction might consider purchasing additional right-of-way to anticipate future construction. When improving existing facilities, designers should consider purchasing additional right-of-way or narrowing the vehicle portion of the roadway.

4.3.4 Passing Space and Passing Space Interval

Passing space is defined as a section of path wide enough to allow two wheelchair users to pass one another or travel abreast (Figure 4-8). The passing space provided should also be designed to allow one wheelchair user to turn in a complete circle (Figure 4-9).

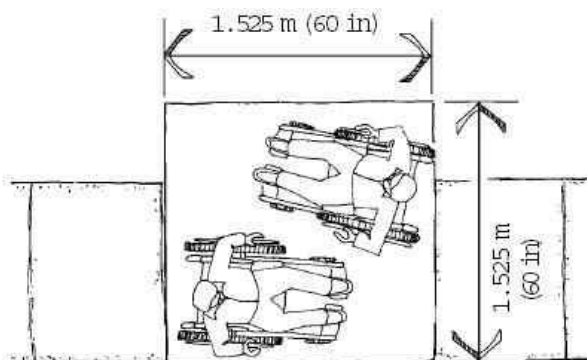


Figure 4-8: Passing spaces should be included at intervals on narrow sidewalks to allow wheelchair users to pass one another.

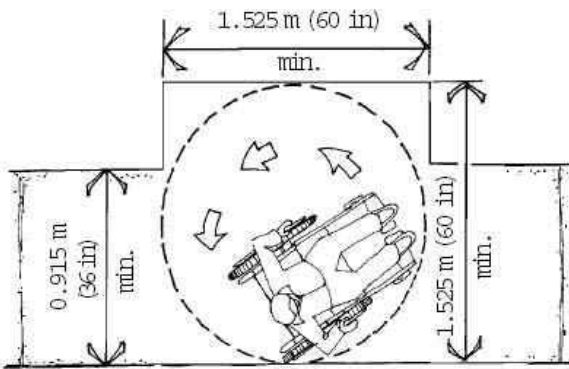


Figure 4-9: Wheelchair users require 1.525 m x 1.525 m (60 in x 60 in) to maneuver in a complete circle.

Passing space interval is defined as the distance between passing spaces. Passing spaces should be provided when the sidewalk width is narrow for a prolonged extent because of a narrow design width or continuous obstacles.

Many agencies and private organizations do not provide guidelines for passing space or passing space intervals. Those that do provide guidelines concur with ADAAG Section 4.3.4, which specifies that accessible routes with less than 1.525 m (60 in) of clear width must provide passing spaces at least 1.525 m (60 in) wide at reasonable intervals not exceeding 61 m (200 ft). If turning or maneuvering is necessary, a turning space of 1.525 m x 1.525 m (60 in x 60 in) should be provided (ADAAG, U.S. Access Board, 1991).

4.3.7 Grates and Gaps

A grate is a framework of latticed or parallel bars that prevents large objects from falling through a drainage inlet but permits water and some debris to fall through the slots (Figure 4-12). A gap is defined as a single channel embedded in the travel surface of a path. Gaps are often found at intersections where railroad tracks are embedded into the road surface.

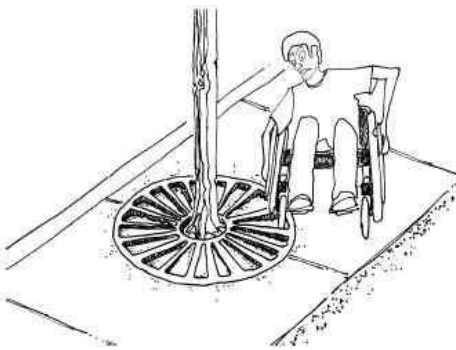


Figure 4-12: Wheelchair casters and cane and crutch tips can easily get caught in wide grates.

Wheelchair casters and crutch tips can get caught in poorly aligned grate and gap openings. ADAAG specifies that grates located in walking surfaces should have spaces no greater than 13 mm (0.5 in) wide in one direction. It also states that gratings with elongated openings should be oriented so that the long dimension is perpendicular to the dominant direction of travel (ADAAG, U.S. Access

Board,1991). Although ADAAG does not directly address gaps, the similarity of a gap to a single grate slot suggests that ADAAG's grate specifications also apply to gaps.

NOTE: Also included in chapter 4 of the Federal Highway Administration chapter four about sidewalks and accessibility are topics such as slope, elements, obstacles, curb ramps, driveways and so on.

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/sidewalks/chap4a.cfm

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CITY TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

Sidewalks play a vital role in city life. As conduits for pedestrian movement and access, they enhance connectivity and promote walking. As public spaces, sidewalks serve as the front steps to the city, activating streets socially and economically. Safe, accessible, and well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental and necessary investment for cities, and have been found to enhance general public health and maximize social capital.

Just as roadway expansions and improvements have historically enhanced travel for motorists, superior sidewalk design can encourage walking by making it more attractive. Sidewalks are an essential component of the urban environment and serve as key corridors for people, goods, and commerce.

Numerous studies have shown that good pedestrian network connectivity and walkability have a positive impact on land values.

Critical

Sidewalks have a desired minimum through zone of 6 feet and an absolute minimum of 5 feet. Where a sidewalk is directly adjacent to moving traffic, the desired minimum is 8 feet, providing a minimum 2-foot buffer for street furniture and utilities.

Sidewalk design should go beyond the bare minimums in both width and amenities. Pedestrians and businesses thrive where sidewalks have been designed at an appropriate scale, with sufficient lighting, shade, and street-level activity. These considerations are especially important for streets with higher traffic speeds and volumes, where pedestrians may otherwise feel unsafe and avoid walking.

Relocation of fixed objects, such as utility poles, light fixtures, and other street furniture should not impinge on or restrict the adjacent walkway. Walkways must be clear of fixed objects in coordination with ADA accessibility guidelines.

Recommended

If a sidewalk is directly adjacent to the roadway, 2 feet should be added to the absolute minimum clear path width to ensure that there is sufficient space for roadside hardware and snow storage.⁸ Parking provides a valuable buffer between the pedestrian and vehicle realm. Urban arterials or high-volume downtown streets directly abutting the pedestrian realm should be buffered in some capacity, whether through a street furniture zone, parking, cycle track, or other feature. Sidewalks of minimum dimensions directly adjacent to the traveled way should be avoided.



About NACTO

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association that represents large cities on transportation issues of local, regional and national significance. NACTO views the transportation departments of major cities as effective and necessary partners in regional and national transportation efforts, promoting their interests in federal decision-making. We facilitate the exchange of transportation ideas, insights and best practices among large cities, while fostering a cooperative approach to key issues facing cities and metropolitan areas. As a coalition of city transportation departments, NACTO is committed to raising the state of the practice for street design and transportation by building a common vision, sharing data, peer-to-peer exchange in workshops and conferences, and regular communication among member cities. We believe that by working together, cities can save time and money, while more effectively achieving their policy goals and objectives.

ADA REQUIREMENTS:

Sidewalk located at least 2 ft. from a curb should be a minimum of 5 ft. wide. Exceptions may be made for local conditions, but ADA requirements must be met.

A sidewalk proposed within 2 ft. of a curb will be placed adjacent to the curb and be a minimum of 6 ft. wide. Exceptions may be made, but ADA requirements must be met.

For sidewalk widths less than 5 ft., a 5 ft. by 5 ft. passing space is to be provided at intervals no greater than 200 ft. http://epg.modot.org/index.php?title=642.1_Sidewalk_Design_Criteria

EXHIBIT 7.2 SIDEWALKS

THIS ...



NOT THIS ...



Provide room for people to walk comfortably. Pedestrians walk 24 inches away from walls of all heights (CH 4: Sidewalk Design Guidelines & Existing Practices, Federal Highway Administration)

8. LANDSCAPE

FINDINGS:

- **The City has various inconsistent requirements regarding landscaping:**
 - The “City Action” section of the Submittal Requirements, item 5, requires a finding that *“Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.”*
 - There are requirements for landscaping in setbacks in CD (4.44.060, .070, and .080) and CD/R3 (14.52.060).
 - Guidelines describe “Community Expectations” of “A high quality of traditional architectural and landscape design.... “ (p. 7).
 - The Downtown Design Guidelines provide additional guidance for landscaping in the Mixed Commercial District (p. 59) and First Street District (p. 66-67), which together cover the CD and CD/R3 zones, but there are substantial challenges with narrow setbacks and the adverse shadow effects described elsewhere.
 - The Downtown Design Plan (p. 40) does not address landscaping for the CD and CD/R3 areas, other than through general comments.
- **These requirements and their enforcement are insufficient:**
 - Street trees (both newly planted and more mature) are inconsistent in size and quality.
 - Lack of companion plantings in tree wells crates a sense of starkness as opposed to one of lushness.
 - Walls and non-transparent surfaces rarely incorporate effective plantings.
 - Landscaping is sparse and/or slow growing in many areas because of neglect or because selected plants receive insufficient light. Compass orientation of major streets in CD and CD/R3 results in significantly different light availability on opposite sides of the street. Tall buildings exacerbate the problem.

EXHIBIT 8.1 shows examples of both desirable and unacceptable landscaping.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. When full landscape plans are submitted for city review, city staff should convene a small group composed of a landscape designer or architect, arborist (if plan involves trees), and city maintenance employee with plant-care expertise to review the plan and provide input to the planning staff and subsequent reviewers. Factors to be considered are:

- City landscaping guidelines
- Provide continuity in the downtown
- Best plant size to use
- Best plant for location
- Lighting exposure and number of hours given shadows of adjacent/opposing buildings
- How plants and trees complement adjoining landscaping
- Maintenance required for healthy growth and longevity

B. Task the city arborist to develop a list of recommended trees and minimum sizes for each.

Listed trees should be appropriate for soil and light conditions in downtown Los Altos and represent a variety to avoid the complete wipe out if a disease affects a specific species. Proposed size to be planted for a given project should be reviewed by the city arborist or a certified arborist with relevant experience. The following general guidelines should apply:

- Minimum 8 feet height when planted
- 15-25 foot canopy after 8-10 years
- At least 15 gallon size when planted
- Light exposure for each planting that will allow selected species to thrive

C. Require that plans for care and maintenance be submitted along with landscaping plans.

Enforceable rules need to be in place regarding the watering and care of trees not maintained by the city, with replacement if trees do not thrive.

D. Implement companion plantings that will contribute to the desired Downtown Guideline that recommends an appearance of abundant and substantial landscaping.

Companion plantings will fill in and hide the tree well. Companion plantings will also help to protect tree trunks from sun and pedestrian damage.

E. Enforce current Design Guidelines (Section 3.1.2a) that recommend “use [of] abundant landscaping” for wall covering and store front landscaping. Provide “now” and “later” (+5 years) landscaping photos plus photos of desirable landscapes and those that are unattractive.

Enforcement will create a fuller/denser landscaping vision and improve aesthetics downtown.

F. Increase landscaping in the front of buildings. (Also refer to Recommendation 7B.)

This can be done by adding at least 1 foot up to a much-preferred 3 additional feet to the current 2-foot setback for CD and CD/R3 mixed-use buildings.

The proposed setback, with wider planting beds and cutout in hardscape or vertical elements, allows for landscaping which is pedestrian-friendly and softens the impact of the building’s size. It also helps to mitigate pedestrian inclination to walk closer to the street due to perceived restrictions of movement close to buildings without landscaping, and attract interest to each storefront.

G. Create a list of suggested plants for the developer to consider when creating the landscape design. The suggested list should be developed by the city arborist and gardening staff, with experience derived from caring for plantings in downtown.

Include sections that address all micro-climates of the downtown area. Some examples are: shade areas, full-sun areas, and areas adjacent to parking lots and driveways. A plant list will:

- Be a useful guide that can eliminate guesswork for the developer and landscape designer.
- When combined with “now” and “later” pictures, will help alleviate confusion about what to plant as well as what the city expects with regard to landscaping for new and refurbished development.

Follow a format similar to the one guiding “The Care of Oak trees in Los Altos,” per the Environmental Commission.

H. Incorporate requirements for amenities and landscaping in the setback and along building fronts in any future streetscape plan for First Street between Main and San Antonio, and encourage additional setbacks for landscaping.

EXHIBIT 8.1 EXAMPLES OF LANDSCAPING

CORNER PLANTINGS

THIS ...



Photo 1

NOT THIS ...



Photo 2

FREE STANDING PLANTERS

THIS ...



Photo 3

NOT THIS ...



Photo 4

WELL-MAINTAINED PLANTING IN FRONT OF BUSINESSES

THIS ...



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8

NOT THIS ...



Photo 9



Photo 10

FOR INVITING PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

THIS ...



Photo 11

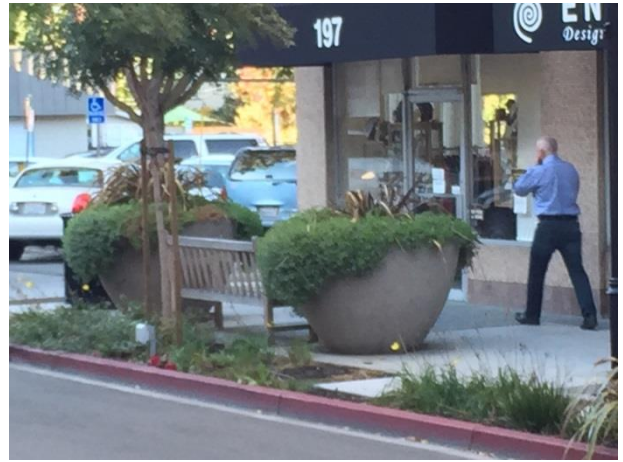


Photo 12

NOT THIS ...



Photo 13

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

THIS ...



Photo 14



Photo 15

NOT THIS ...



Photo 16

CURB PLANTINGS

THIS ...



Photo 17



Photo 18



Photo 19



Photo 20

NOT THIS ...



Photo 21



Photo 22

SIDEWALK AND BUILDING FRONTAGE

THIS ...



Photo 23

NOT THIS ...



Photo 24

MIXED USE

THIS ...



Photo 25

NOT THIS ...

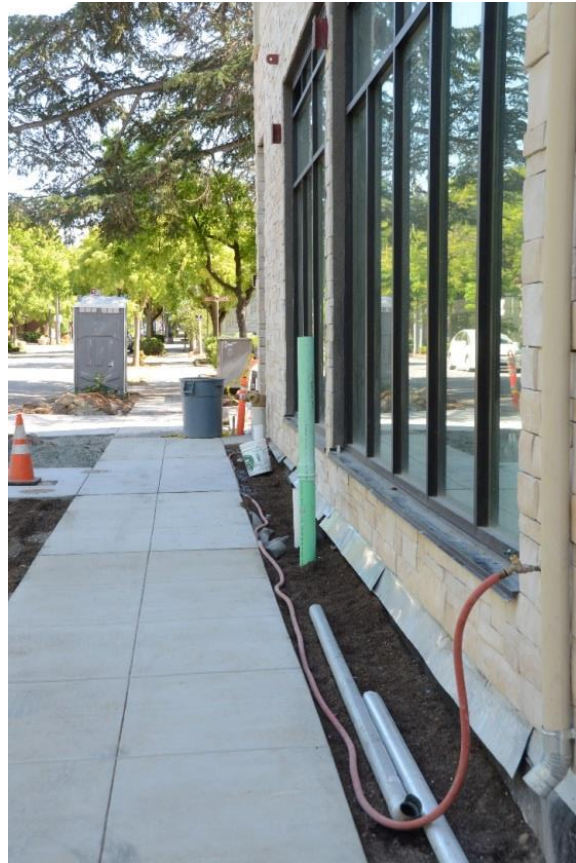


Photo 26

Adding a foot or two creates space for lush planting.

BUILDING ENTRY

THIS ...



Photo 27



Photo 28



Photo 29



Photo 30

BUILDING ENTRY

NOT THIS ...



Photo 31



Photo 32



Photo 33

DOWNTOWN ENTRY POINTS

THIS ...



Photo 34



Photo 35

NOT THIS ...



Photo 36



Photo 37



Photo 38

9. QUALITY OF BUILDING MATERIALS

FINDINGS:

- **The quality of building materials contributes significantly to a welcoming pedestrian experience and to maintaining the village character of Los Altos.**
- **Current practice is not well-codified, and existing guidelines are inadequate.**
 - The current Design Review process requires the following finding (Submittal Requirements. City Action):

“4. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.”
 - The Downtown Design Plan includes the statement that “Color schemes should be harmonious with surrounding structures and consistent with the original time period of the building.”
 - The Downtown Design Guidelines include a reference to a “wide variety of natural materials” as one feature of Village Character (p. 11) and warn that “Corporate Architecture” will not be approved with “...materials, or colors that do not relate to the site, adjacent development, or Los Altos’ community character” (p. 23).
 - Guidelines for the First Street District (p.68) refer to use of “materials that are common in the downtown core.”
- **Although the quality of exteriors on the new buildings have generally been viewed favorably, the residential project at 396 First St. is viewed as one example of exterior materials and finishes that fall below the desired level of quality and integrity.**
- **The community is highly dependent on staff for the evaluation of proposed materials because no regulation or guideline specifies acceptable – or prohibits any unacceptable – colors and textures or types of exterior finishes for buildings in the Downtown area.**
- **Current Submittal Requirements for design review require a Materials Board with color photos of exterior materials as well as a color rendering and 3D digitally generated model (presented as 2D image). There is no requirement for actual materials (or for samples of adequate size for evaluation), nor do any guidelines require digital or 3D modeling to assist in the evaluation of materials/colors.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To ensure that the color and texture of exterior finishes reflect an appropriate relationship with other buildings, are consistent with the village character, and coordinate with other architectural elements to minimize apparent height, bulk, and mass:

A. Modify the required finding as follows:

“Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, boy, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. Materials, finishes, and colors used serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and in the downtown village.”

- B. Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review, item 7 Color Renderings and 3D Model” and/or the Design Guidelines to require that proposed buildings in the Downtown district be modeled using 3D and other forms of digital simulation that depict the Materials Board and allow for closer consideration of proposed colors and textures of exterior finishes in context.**
- C. Require submission of a physical Materials Board of samples of colors, materials and finishes in the submission requirement checklist.**

The recommended Materials Board requirement was incorporated in the November 2015 revision of the “Submittal Requirements.”

- D. Require submission of larger scale samples and/or examples of uses of the materials and finishes in prior projects for materials and finishes not in common use in the Downtown district.**

10. SHADOWS

FINDINGS:

- **Buildings on First, Second, and Third Streets cast greater shadows on sidewalks, streets, and opposing buildings than would occur with the same type of development in the core on Main and State because of the differences in compass orientation.**
 - Shadows cast by new construction contribute to negative public reaction of a “tunnel” experience on First Street.
- **Many cities require proposals to show shadow impact on adjacent/opposing buildings and spaces in accordance with standard practice for such evaluations. Palo Alto has recently used such expertise to resolve concerns over shadows.**
- **Shadow projections are a simple task in today’s digital systems.**
- **Los Altos has never required shadow information and has no experience considering it as part of a development proposal. PTC and Council members expressed surprise at the deep shadow effects of some recently completed buildings.**
- **Excessive shadows affect the type and success of landscaping , which is not considered in the building structure or landscape plan.**

(See additional resources regarding shadow studies in *EXHIBIT 10.1*.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. **As neither staff nor PTC have such expertise, the city should engage a specialist with knowledge of standard practice for evaluating daylight/shadow impacts in a commercial setting. Scope of work should include identifying the tools and recommending a process for evaluating the impact of proposed developments on the streetscape, sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscape plans. Create a process for including such evaluation in the decision making process.**
- B. **Generalized modeling should be done of the light and shadows for the downtown area as currently built and at full build-out under specified zoning. (See Section 12, Physical and Digital Models.)**
- C. **If warranted based on the full-city model, establish light plane guidelines for commercial development.** [Note: There are light plane guidelines in place for residential buildings.]

EXHIBIT 10.1 SHADOW STUDIES

An animated example of a shade study is at

http://gardenbleu.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/shadow-study_Feb20.gif

Animation of shadow study in part of San Francisco:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/posttv/business/animation-shows-potential-shadows-creeping-across-san-francisco/2015/05/04/cdef896e-f299-11e4-bca5-21b51bbdf93e_video.html

Example detailed requirements for shade studies where development affects public open space:

http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/publications_reports/Shadow_Analysis_Memo-07-10-14.pdf

Article about the increasing attention paid by cities to shadow issues:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/05/04/in-the-shadows-of-booming-cities-a-tension-between-sunlight-and-prosperity/>

11. VIEWS

FINDINGS:

- The downtown treescape and views of the southwest foothills are valued features of the downtown triangle for both motorists and pedestrians.
- The primary streets in CD and CD/R3 zones roughly parallel the foothills, so that development on these streets tends to be more obstructive to views than building in the downtown core.
- Some recent developments obstruct views of the southwest foothills, to the surprise of residents and those who review or approve projects.
- There is no process for evaluating the impact of a proposed project on the foothill vistas or treescape, and the true rendering of a proposal against the local area with the foothills is not required.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Make preservation of existing views of the surrounding hills and downtown tree canopy a part of the Design Review process for buildings in the Downtown triangle.**

Two cities similarly proximate to the Santa Cruz mountains have successfully implemented requirements regarding views:

Los Gatos: "Views to the surrounding hills should be maintained especially at signalized intersections."
(Los Gatos Commercial Guidelines, pg. 42, # 5A.1
<http://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/325>)

Town of Woodside: "SCENIC CORRIDORS. (a) Lands visible (if currently visible, or if visible if existing vegetation was removed) from the driving surface of the following (state-designated) scenic highways:
...(Town of Woodside 153.221)"

- B. Specify views to protect, with emphasis on the foothills as seen from Southbound San Antonio Road and treescape from State and Main. Document the selected views in the design guidelines and include photographs. Specify how submittals should address the issue of views.**

Photographic examples of key views are shown in *EXHIBIT 11.1*.

EXHIBIT 11.1 VIEWS
PROTECT REMAINING VIEWS LIKE THESE ...



View 1: San Antonio Road toward Foothill



View 2

AND THESE ...



View 3: Main Street



View 4 : State Street

AND THIS ...



View 5: San Antonio southbound past hotel

HERE YOU SEE THE VIEW



View 6: Here today ...

SOON YOU WON'T



View 7: Gone tomorrow.

12. DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL MODELS

FINDINGS:

- The City had little experience with commercial and mixed-use projects when the projects reviewed by DBC were approved.
- Some council members and PTC commissioners, as well as residents, were surprised by the adverse impacts created by these buildings.
- Existing planning tools and project submittal requirements lag current technology, which can better show the impact of proposed development, both for individual projects and build-out under different zoning requirements.
- Current requirements (*EXHIBIT 12.1*) for individual project submissions are inadequate, in that they do not:
 - provide realistic views (2D compression of 3D “Google Street View” perspective that is wide angle rather than natural human vision)
 - show shadow impacts (especially problematic with narrow, NW/SE-oriented streets). See additional resources regarding shadow studies in *EXHIBIT 9.1*
 - fully place individual project in context
 - allow evaluation of impact on streetscape and views
- Decision makers lack good visualization tools from which to evaluate impact of build-out under different zoning scenarios.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Undertake a project to identify 3D modeling software that:

- Provides standard 2-D GIS parameters (e.g. lot lines, rights-of-way, zoning map overlay) to tie in to other online information .
- shows accurate 3-D rendering of existing buildings, with flexibility to begin at LOD 2 and increase to LOD 3, based on the GML3 international standard for urban 3D modeling (See *EXHIBIT 12.2*)
- models shadow impact on adjacent/opposing buildings and spaces at standardized dates and times. (See Section 9 “Shadows” above.)
- allows pedestrian view of treescape/skyline to aid evaluation of impacts. (See section 10 “Views” above.)
- is extensible for modeling sections of the city and for a future “smart cities” project.
- allows generalized 3D visualizations (initially LOD 2) for scenarios selected by decision makers (e.g. full build-out under specified zoning).
- can generate 3D “printed” [physical] model of specified area (e.g. downtown triangle), with ability to “print” and replace specific buildings for proposed development. This will allow decision-makers and the community to visualize the proposal and its impact.

B. Develop digital and physical model of the downtown triangle using parameters specified by Council.

C. Require developers to provide data necessary to model their proposal to the digital system described above.

EXHIBIT 12.1 CURRENT 3-D SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

“Submittal Requirements, item 7 – Color Renderings and 3D Model

“a. Provide a sufficient number of perspective color renderings of the proposed structure, photo simulated within the existing context of the built and natural surroundings, to present how all elevations of the building will appear at a pedestrian scale/level.

“b. Provide a digital model (using SketchUp or a similar program) of the proposed development and adjacent buildings within the broader streetscape area that can be presented and manipulated to represent the three dimensional qualities of the proposed building within the existing context of the built and natural surroundings.”

The above are provided as 2D images. There are no requirements as to the perspective to be presented vis a vis “wide” angle or natural human eye view (generally 42-52 mm in standard 1:1 lens).

EXHIBIT 12.2 SUMMARY OF LEVEL OF DETAIL STANDARD FOR 3D MODELING

Different 3D modeling applications define “Level of Detail” differently. The following is a general description, used in the CityGML as an example:

- LOD 0: 2.5D footprints
- LOD 1: Buildings represented by block models (usually extruded footprints)
- LOD 2: Building models with standard roof structures
- LOD 3: Detailed (architectural) building models
- LOD 4: LOD 3 building models supplemented with interior features.

Some basic information is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3D_city_models

More about CityGML: http://www.citygmlwiki.org/index.php/Basic_Information

Useful research paper that outlines some issues in defining level of detail:

<http://www.gdmc.nl/publications/reports/GISt62.pdf>

Follow-up paper on the above:

<http://www.gim-international.com/content/article/redefining-the-level-of-detail-for-3d-models>

APPENDIX A: AD HOC DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE CHARTER

October 14, 2014 Los Altos City Council Meeting Item #13

http://los-altos.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=848&meta_id=39634

RECOMMENDATION from then-Mayor Satterlee:

1. Council form an ad hoc committee of nine voting members to review recently completed buildings in downtown Los Altos in the context of the current zoning regulations, the adopted Downtown Design Guidelines and Downtown Design Plan, and the results of the 2012 and 2014-15 downtown surveys, and to determine next steps to ensure new buildings downtown meet community expectations. Next steps should include a statement of the expected outcome.
2. Given both the importance of downtown to the community and the interest in downtown, Council appoint this committee using the same process as we do for appointing commissioners: namely, advertise the openings, accept applications, and conduct public interviews.
3. The make-up of the committee be residents of the City of Los Altos whose only property interest downtown is their primary residence, no more than 25% of the committee live within the downtown triangle, the committee include two current Planning and Transportation (PTC) Commissioners, and it be facilitated by a nonvoting Councilmember, whose role will be limited to chairing the meetings.
4. The committee hold noticed meetings and allow public participation during one meeting prior to deliberating on their recommendations, and again after they have draft recommendations, before they make their final recommendations.
5. The committee's recommendations be reviewed by the Planning and Transportation Commission before being considered for adoption by Council.
6. Staff be directed to update the Downtown Design Plan with input from the committee.

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

Committee members consulted professionals in Los Altos and neighboring cities, as well as zoning codes, design plans, articles and books relevant to the charter.

Meetings/ Contacts	Profession	Location	Purpose
5	Developers/Architects	Palo Alto, Mt. View	Feedback on checklists, ARB
2	Landscape Architects/arborists		Feedback on checklists, ARB, landscape
5	Planner	Los Altos	Feedback on process and documents
3	Council Member	Los Altos	Individual meetings, each w/3 committee members
2	Planner	Los Gatos	Feedback on process and documents
1	Planner	Mountain View	ARB/Design Review
1	ARB member	Palo Alto	ARB/Design Review
1	Planner	Powell, OH	Feedback on process and documents
5	Planners/Architects	Los Altos, Mt. View, SF, Houston, London	3D modeling for city planning and development projects.

Documents Reviewed	City/Agency	Purpose
Downtown Design Guidelines	Los Altos	Clarity/consistency
Downtown Design Plan	Los Altos	Clarity/consistency
Zoning Code	Los Altos	Clarity & Consistency with Design Guidelines, applicability to review buildings
Zoning	Carmel	
	Los Gatos	
	Pacific Grove	
	Pismo Beach	
	Saratoga	
Design Guidelines and Submittal Req's	Benecia	Comparison
	Capitola	Comparison
	Carmel	Comparison
	Cupertino	Comparison
	Los Altos Hills	Comparison
	Los Gatos	Comparison
	Mountain View	Comparison
	Pacific Grove	Comparison
	Palo Alto	Comparison
	Pismo Beach	Comparison
	Portola Valley	Comparison
	Saratoga	Comparison
	Sunnyvale	Comparison
	Woodside	Comparison
	NYC	Light planes/shadows
	Powell, OH	Comparison, esp. pedestrian scale, 3D modeling and GIS-zoning links
Driveway Specs	Caltrans	Driveways
Title 23	Cal Water	Water efficient landscapes

Books/Articles	
Light and shadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ http://gizmodo.com/do-we-have-a-legal-right-to-light-1455302177 ▪ http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/49911 ▪ http://billmoyers.com/2014/11/28/new-skyscrapers-forever-changing-central-park/ ▪ http://www.wbdg.org/resources/form.php ▪ http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Long-shadows-create-political-hurdle-for-S-F-7382467.php
Human Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ http://www.community-design.com/ ▪ http://id2126le2012.pbworks.com/w/page/54812242/Space-Scale ▪ http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/housing_authority_city_asheville/haca_publications_lo_cal/1981_devel_guidelines_montford/mont_dg_jpg/HACA_mont_dg_020_mod.jpg ▪ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_scale ▪ http://www.planetizen.com/node/67761
3D model of San Francisco	http://www.cnet.com/news/3d-printed-san-francisco-the-next-great-tool-in-city-planning/
Landscaping glossary	https://www.asla.org/nonmembers/publicrelations/glossary.htm
Landscape architect, arborist, etc.	http://lesliehalleck.com/garden-library/articles/what-is-a-horticulturist-what-is-a-landscape-architect-you-mean-they-are-di
Human scale	http://www.changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/human-scale-building-facade
Article: <i>It's the Ceiling Heights</i>	<p>Author: David Baker</p> http://www.dbarchitect.com/us/press/15/It%27s%20the%20Ceiling%20Heights%2C%20for%20One%20Thing.html
Article <i>How do you Define Community Character?</i>	<p>Author: Gary Pivo, PhD, Professor School of Landscape Architecture and Planning, COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING, AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE</p> http://www.u.arizona.edu/~gpivo/Character.pdf
Book <i>Creating Carmel: the Enduring Vision</i>	<p>Authors: Harold & Ann Gilliam</p>
Book <i>The Buildings of Main Street</i>	<p>Author: Richard Longstreth, PhD, architectural historian and a professor at George Washington University</p>
Vision Capitola	http://goodtimes.sc/santa-cruz-news/eyeing-a-change/ http://visioncapitola.com/

APPENDIX C: MEMBERS' EXPERTISE & EXPERIENCE

Thomas Barton: 45 year resident of Los Altos and LAH. Yale BA, Northwestern JD, Stanford MBA. Booz Allen consultant. Law practice for five years in Los Altos with Macleod and Fuller and thirty five years in Palo Alto, retiring as a Manatt, Phelps and Phillips partner. Developed May Lane in Los Altos and Barton Court in LAH. Represented Miller Properties and the Triad companies which owned and developed many properties in Los Altos in the 1970's. Founder and CEO of Neurex Corporation and other local ventures which he took public. Grandfather who loved to walk his children – and now walks his grandchildren – in the Pet Parade.

Anita Enander: Resident of Los Altos 38 years. MBA, Organizational Development. Owner, international magazine and digital media company (4 years). Owner, private management consulting firm, public and private sector clients in US, Europe and Japan (15 years). Founder, past chair, and director of two non-profit research organizations. Board vice president and president (6 years) of international K-8 private school. Project manager for structural retrofit and major exterior remodel of 30-year old, 24-unit townhome development. Project manager for expansion of private school, including increase in enrollment under use permit, extension of utilities, specs and installation of 6 portable classrooms. Owner-builder single-family residences, including one on 30% grade, and complete restoration of historic home. Owner, breeder, trainer of Arabian horses. Married, one adult daughter.

Deb Hope: Grew up in Los Altos, returned in 2006. Licensed California Real Estate Broker. Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM, an educational institute focused on providing professionals in commercial real estate with training in investment analysis, market analysis, financial analysis, and user decision analysis.) Owner-builder in 2 residential constructions. Manage family's commercial real estate. Completed Urban Land Institute's training program in Real Estate Development, I, II, & III. LEED Certification. Attended Presidio School pursuing a Master's in Public Administration in Sustainable Management. Member, Urban Land Institute. Founding member of *Los Altos Forward*, a ground-up citizen involvement group focused on increasing vibrancy of downtown Los Altos and providing community education about best practices in community development.

Hon. Edward A. Infante (Ret.) is a former Chief Magistrate Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California who has more than 30 years of dispute resolution experience. He is known for his ability to mediate complex cases involving a wide range of issues, having served as a mediator and Special Master in a variety of complex business disputes including antitrust and intellectual property cases and securities class actions. Judge Infante currently works with JAMS Arbitration, Mediation and ADR Services.

Pat Marriott: Los Altos resident 7 years. BA Physics Sonoma State, MS EE/Computer Science UC Berkeley. Software developer at IBM and HP. First software product manager at Apple. Manager software product marketing team for Apple Lisa. Appointed to Apple Quality of Life Committee to preserve corporate culture. One of first 5 employees at Electronic Arts. Director of marketing (product management, tech support & training, marketing/corporate communications) at Adobe. VP Marketing at eBrary (eBook search), Presidio Systems (clinical trials software), Vantive (integrated customer service applications). Consultant in organizational behavior, corporate culture, product management, documentation, messaging, branding, web content, online Help systems. Los Altos LEAD graduate.

Susan Mensinger: Los Altos Resident for 18 years. AB Stanford, JD Stanford Law School, MBA Stanford. Salomon Brothers corporate finance and mergers & acquisitions. Merchant bank private equity. Founder and CEO of Boothe Capital Group, providing merger & acquisition services to middle market companies. Worked with corporate and not-for-profit and government entities on key financial, strategic, operational and organization issues across a range of sectors including healthcare, natural resources and financial services. Member of the Stanford Law School Board of Visitors. Former Member Stanford University Trustee Committee on Land and Building Development (the planning commission for Stanford). Published law journal article on the use of exclusionary zoning regulations. Graduate of Los Altos LEAD program. Active in local not-for-profit organizations.

Teresa Morris has lived in Los Altos for 12 years. She owns her own consulting business helping parents with the sleep and behavior challenges they encounter with their infants and small children. Her career background is that of a small business owner, as well as working in small business management. She has built businesses from the ground up as well as acquired and managed a variety of retail and restaurant establishments. Her educational background includes psychology, child development and holistic health. Teresa is also an active member of her Loyola Corners neighborhood group, Los Altos for Neighborly Development (LAND).

Nan Nealon See's professional experience spans 20 years operational and financial management of businesses in the financial services, management consulting, wine and hospitality industries. A few of her key accomplishments include overseeing the renovation and restoration of a pre-prohibition winery, working with small business owners aligning operational processes and improving financial performance to achieve growth goals. As a new resident of Los Altos she brings an objective perspective combined with an interest in preserving the community qualities that drew her and her husband to Los Altos as the place to call home and raise a family.

Jane Reed is a former Mayor, a past member of the Los Altos City Council and a past member of the Los Altos Parks and Recreation Commission. She is currently President of "The Terraces at Los Altos" Advisory Board and a member of the Rotary Club of Los Altos. She is a past Executive Director of the Los Altos Village Association and an active community volunteer. Jane holds a B.A. in Liberal Arts with an Art major from the University of California, Berkeley; Secondary Teaching Credential from California State, Hayward; and a Masters Certificate in Museum Studies from JFK University.

Denis Salmon is an attorney who has lived in Los Altos for over 30 years. He was the managing partner of the Palo Alto office of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, LLP, an international law firm, and chair of its intellectual property practice. He directed the architectural design and construction of the firm's offices on Page Mill Road. His legal experience includes land use, environmental and real estate litigation. His past community activities include service on the boards of the Los Altos Educational Foundation, the Santa Clara County Bar Association and the Silicon Valley Campaign for Legal Services.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON
THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016, BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY
HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS,
CALIFORNIA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair McTIGHE, Vice-Chair LORELL, Commissioners BRESSACK, BAER, BODNER, and OREIZY

ABSENT: Commissioner MOISON

STAFF: Advance Planning Services Manager KORNFELD, Current Planning Services Manager DAHL and City Attorney HOUSTON

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Resident and Environmental Commissioner, Gary Hedden, stated that there is a meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2016 on Community Choice Energy.

Resident and downtown property owner, Abigail Ahrens, stated a traffic sign issue at Main Street and San Antonio Road exists regarding U-turns. She requested allowing U-turns at Main Street to facilitate re-entry to the downtown or to allow a left turn onto Edith Avenue.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Planning and Transportation Commission Minutes

Approve the minutes of the November 5, 2015 Study Session, November 19, 2015 Study Session, and December 17, 2015 Regular Meeting.

MOTION by Commissioner BAER, seconded by Vice-Chair LORELL, to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2015 Study Session as amended by Commissioner BRESSACK with regard to not reviewing downtown building colors and Commissioner BAER to clarify the concern about when an architectural consultant might be useful if at all.

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 4/0/2 VOTE, WITH BODNER AND OREIZY ABSTAINING.

MOTION by Commissioner BAER, seconded by Vice-Chair LORELL, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2015 Study Session with the City-wide Parking Committee as amended by Commissioner BRESSACK to clarify the wording and Commissioner BAER to indicate the intention of a sunset clause for changes to downtown policies.

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 5/1 VOTE, WITH BODNER OPPOSED because she did not believe the minutes were accurate and a complete record of the discussion.

Commissioner BODNER presented an alternative record of the meeting.

MOTION by Commissioner BAER, seconded by Vice-Chair LORELL, to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2015 Regular Meeting as written.
THE MOTION PASSED BY A 5/0/1 VOTE, WITH BRESSACK ABSTAINING.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. 15-CA-04 – City of Los Altos – Municipal Code Amendment

Adoption of an ordinance repealing Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 4.45, amending Los Altos Municipal Code section 14.02 and adding a new Chapter 14.82 regarding the prohibition of the cultivation, procession, delivery and dispensing of marijuana throughout the City of Los Altos. *City Attorney: Houston*

City Attorney HOUSTON provided a brief report, recommending removing the Medical Marijuana ordinance from the Business License Code and incorporating it into the Zoning Code.

The Commission discussed the nature of the changes in regulation.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to adopt the amended ordinance and move it from the Business License Code to the Zoning Code.
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

DISCUSSION

3. Downtown Buildings Committee Recommendations

Consideration of Downtown Development Committee recommendations related to development standards and requirements for new development in Downtown Los Altos.

Planning Services Manager DAHL introduced the Downtown Buildings Committee members Anita Enander and Susan Mensinger who summarized the Committee's recommendations and gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Resident and City-wide Parking Committee member Bill Maston, opposed the height changes because it affected the upcoming downtown visioning process and noted that the vision process should dictate any changes to the regulations; opposed limits on architecture (towers); suggestion to define desirable materials palate rather than use compatibility; noted that shadow studies can be done easily.

Resident Gary Hedden said he supported less bulk, expressed concern about the about the impact on mid-density housing and senior housing, and supported changes to promote walkability.

Downtown property owner John Barton stated his concern about height limits that may reduce the value of properties.

Resident and downtown property owner Emeric McDonald stated his concern about the recommendations affecting development and not to limit the height to two story buildings.

Resident and downtown property owner Abigail Ahrens questioned how the Downtown Buildings Committee was charged by the City Council with changing any regulations; noted the many different

stake holders that made up the prior development committee; and that this committee effort was an opportunity for residents' to voice their opinions; protecting downtown views is not appropriate in the downtown context; and encouraged diverse landscaping.

Director of Passerelle Investments, Kelly Snider, opposed the height limit reduction, stating that it hinders future development efforts; and, that there needs to be a more comprehensive approach.

Downtown property owner, broker and investor, Jim Koch, stated concern about height reduction and suggested to focus on building width; and supported architecture review.

There was no other public comment.

Commissioner BAER recused himself for the first discussion on the proposed CD zoning changes due to real property interest within 500 feet of the CD district.

The Commission discussed the various Downtown Buildings Committee's recommendations, grouping several together by subject and then making a motion on each, starting with the Height, Views/Shadow, and the Pedestrian Experience summary, and then the Documents, Policy and Procedures summary.

The Commission discussed the recommendation to reduce the permitted height of the CD and CD/R3 districts and additional setbacks in the CD/R3 district. Commission comments included: noting that limiting the height would affect the vitality of the downtown area by restricting development and with regard to prior height increases; that design review was a better way to control the height and bulk of development; that changing the regulations will make development opportunities less predictable and negatively affect reinvestment in downtown; and that an economic feasibility study would be necessary to consider such changes.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner OREIZY, to oppose reducing the height limit in the CD and CD/R3 districts and the setback increases to the CD/R3 district (Recommendation 1-A).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5/0).

The Commission discussed the recommendation to increase the building articulation requirements in the CD district. Commission discussion included: concerns that more prescriptive zoning limits design flexibility; that it is important to have a Commission discussion on the appropriateness of any particular design; and, that it is a good goal but not the best solution.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner OREIZY, to oppose increasing the building articulation requirements in the CD district (Recommendation 1-C).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (5/0).

Commissioner BAER returned at 8:26 P.M. for the remainder of the meeting.

The Commission discussed the recommendations for wider sidewalks, mandatory third floor setbacks, and increases in the minimum setbacks to avoid the "tunnel effect." The Commission discussion included: concerns that wider sidewalk meant reducing the development potential unless taken from the street right-of-way; that mandatory upper level setbacks affected development

potential and design creativity; that there were economic impacts from such changes that should be studied before requiring such changes; wider sidewalks were appropriate in some circumstances; that the community was not seeking wider sidewalks; wider sidewalks affect street utilities and street amenities and infrastructure; that the Downtown Design Guidelines address such concerns of building, bulk mass and scale; that the Commission needs more input from the general public to consider such changes; that development consistency, transparent process and understood goals equaled a better design result, rather than prescriptive changes regardless of context; and, that development incentives are needed to drive the goals and desired results.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner OREIZY, to support goal of wider sidewalks and bulk reduction, but not the proposed recommendation without a feasibility study (Recommendations 1-B, 1-D, 1-E, and 1-F).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

The Commission discussed the recommendations to amend the height limitations and exceptions with regard to lowering the height exceptions for towers and other similar elements, improve the photographic examples in the Downtown Design Guidelines, remove guideline references encouraging towers, and amending the submittal requirements and staff reporting to highlight height exceptions. The Commission discussion included: support for the concepts depending on their implementation; concerns about limiting the building design by restricting towers; concern about limiting all towers and considering limiting towers only when permitted in districts that allow taller heights (e.g., 45-foot tall building heights would have limited tower heights).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Vice-Chair LORELL, to support the recommendations to amend the height limitations and exceptions with regard to lowering the height exceptions for towers and other similar elements, improve the photographic examples in the Downtown Design Guidelines, remove the guideline references to encouraging towers, and to amend the submittal requirements and staff reporting to highlight height exceptions (Recommendations 1-G through 1-N).

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 5/1 VOTE, WITH BODNER OPPOSED to the recommendations on the tower limits and guidelines encouraging towers. Several Commissioners expressed a desire to reconsider the motion. Commissioner BRESSACK withdrew the motion.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to support recommendations to amend the height limitations and exceptions with regard to improving the photographic examples in the Downtown Design Guidelines, and to amend the submittal requirements and staff reporting to highlight height exceptions (Recommendations 1-G, 1-I, 1-J and 1-N).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BODNER, to oppose recommendations to limit the height of towers and remove guidelines encouraging towers (Recommendations 1-H and 1-K).

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 4/2 VOTE, WITH CHAIR McTIGHE OPPOSED because he considered the recommendations as clarifying the code; and VICE-CHAIR LORELL SUPPORTED the Committee's recommendations.

The Commission discussed the recommendation to regulate daylight plane and shadows. The Commission discussion included: support for the idea to illustrate the daylight plane and shadow effects and that it is not necessary for a specialist to consider; support for developing the information but questions about how to regulate the development and under what basis or standards; that the problem should be defined and identified before developing the policy or solution; that it would help identify issues; that it is unnecessary and that the Commission considers building orientation in its review; that architects inherently consider a project's solar access and orientation in building design; and that it would be difficult to mandate regulations because of disparate effects on properties.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to oppose requiring daylight plane and shadow studies, and specialists for considering such information (Recommendation O).

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 5/1 VOTE, WITH VICE-CHAIR LORELL OPPOSED because it is relatively easy information to develop and include.

The Commission discussed recommendations on regulating views and street tree requirements. The Commission discussion included: concern that it was difficult to regulate views due to the subjectively and lack of basis; that trees block views; that improving landscape is good but that it is context dependent; that property owners need to take better care of what is planted; and, that the experience that is valued needs to be defined rather than a specific size or spacing of trees.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to oppose regulations with regard to protecting views (Recommendations 1-P through 1-R).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to support the goals of providing street trees with generous canopies, appropriate spacing, but that such regulations needed further study to determine appropriate heights, spacing (Recommendations 1-T and 1-U).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

The Commission discussed recommendations to improve the landscape requirements of projects. The Commission discussion included

; support to include landscape in the development checklist but not define the terms or specifications further to maintain creativity in designs; support to have a landscape architect on staff but questions about implementation of the recommendations; support for the goals but concerns about the practical implementation; and, suggestions for more guidelines on landscape with better photos but avoid prescribing designs.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, support of the goals of improving the landscape requirements, such as including landscape guidelines, but not prescriptive requirements (Recommendations 1-V through 1-AA, excluding 1-X).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to recommend support of including landscape concepts in a development checklist and to better define landscape guidelines (Recommendation 1-S).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to oppose greater setbacks for landscape base on prior setback concerns (Recommendation 1-X)..

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

The Commission discussed the recommendations on building material quality and the amendment of submittal requirements for 3D modeling. The Commission noted that the staff already made changes to improve requirements for 3D modeling; and that there was support for improving project materials and findings.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to support modifying the findings to clarify and strengthen the language with regard to building materials (Recommendation 1-BB).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

The Commission performed a straw poll on the recommendation to rename the Guidelines to Requirements.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Vice-Chair LORELL, to oppose renaming the Guidelines to Requirements (Recommendation 1-A.1).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Vice-Chair LORELL, to support adding a design guideline checklist, combining the Mixed-Commercial and First Street District in the Guidelines, ensuring consistent terminology in documents, maintaining current documents and purging outdated documents, use more illustrations and diagrams where appropriate in all documents, make documents interactive with online links, and include more detailed checklists outlining all phases of the planning process (Recommendations 1-A.2 through 1-E, and 2-G).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

The Commission discussed recommendations regarding creating an ad hoc building and landscape architectural panel. The Commission discussion included: concerns about a general policy change of bringing in such professionals into the process, and if so, when and what to do with the input; concerns about changing from a citizen review based on policy to an architectural critique; concerns about the potentially unique views of architects, the timing and cost of such reviews; and the benefit of having architects sit on the Commission.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to oppose creating an ad-hoc building and landscape architectural panel (Recommendation 2-I).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BODNER, to support application access and transparency and empowerment, enforcement and accountability of the City standards (Recommendations 3-J, 3-K, and 4-L).

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

The Commission discussed the recommendation for a visioning process and master plan for the downtown area. The Commission comments included: support for downtown visioning but

concerns about understanding its limitations and outcome; that a vision needs a clear majority of community support to be effective; and, that changes to the development regulations should wait until after the vision process.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to defer to the City Council the nature of the vision process and desired outcomes (Recommendation 5-M).
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Chair McTIGHE reported on the December 8, 2015 City Council meeting.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McTIGHE adjourned the meeting at 10:49 P.M.

David Kornfield
Planning Services Manager
Advance Planning



DATE: January 7, 2016

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Planning and Transportation Commission
FROM: Zachary Dahl, Planning Services Manager
SUBJECT: Downtown Buildings Committee Report and Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider the recommendations from the Downtown Buildings Committee and provide recommendations to the City Council

BACKGROUND

On November 24, 2014, the City Council formed the Downtown Buildings Ad Hoc Committee to review recently completed buildings in Downtown Los Altos within the context of the General Plan, current zoning regulations, adopted Downtown Design Guidelines and Downtown Design Plan. The Committee was also instructed to consider the results of downtown surveys conducted by the City in 2012 and 2015. On February 24, 2015, the Council appointed 11 residents to the Committee. The Committee includes residents Thomas Barton, Anita Kay Enander, Hillary Frank, Deborah Hope, Edward Infante, Pat Marriott, Susan Mensinger, Teresa Morris, Jane Reed, Denis Salmon and Nancy Nealson See, and Councilmember Megan Satterlee as at the Committee facilitator.

The Committee's goal was to make recommendations on next steps to ensure new buildings Downtown meet community expectations.

Starting in March 2015, the Committee began holding meetings and formed three subcommittees to evaluate specific topics:

- 1) Quality of materials, curb appeal, landscape, and access to light/air/views;
- 2) Height, towers, setbacks, variances and public benefit; and
- 3) Application of the Guidelines, policies and procedures.

These subcommittees brought back information and recommendations for the full group to consider. By the end of October, the Committee completed its draft report and a list of recommendations. This draft report was presented to the Planning and Transportation Commission on November 5, 2015 in a study session for review and discussion. The study session was informational only and no action was taken. The draft meeting minutes are included as Attachment D.

On December 17, 2015, the Committee approved its final reports and recommendations. The first report focused on issues related to height, views and shadows, and the pedestrian experience in Downtown Los Altos, and is included in Attachment A. The second report focused on the

Downtown Design Guidelines and development review processes and procedures, and is included in Attachment B. Each report includes findings and recommended changes to the Zoning Code, City policies and the development review process as it relates to Downtown. A list that summarizes the Committee’s recommendations is included as Attachment C.

DISCUSSION

Height, Views/Shadow and the Pedestrian Experience

The recommendations in this report focus on the height of buildings within the Downtown, issues related to preserving views from Downtown toward the surrounding hills, the effects of shadowing from new development and the overall pedestrian experience for residents and customers who visit Downtown. The report is included in Attachment A. Each of the Committee’s recommendations is listed below, with the staff comment to the right and a discussion of the item provided below.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
1.	Amend zoning height and design control for CD and CD/R3 and require wider, clear sidewalks	This recommendation may affect Downtown redevelopment and deserves further study to understand economic and development implications.
A.	Amend 14.44.120 – Height of structures (CD) to read “No structure shall exceed 30 feet in height...” Amend 14.52.100 Height of structures (CD/R3) to limit height to 35 feet “For entirely residential projects” and to 30 feet “For mixed-use and commercial projects” as defined in 14.52.060 - Required building setbacks (CD/R3).	

Discussion

In 2010, the City adopted significant zoning changes to the Downtown. These changes included:

- Rezoning the First Street corridor to CRS and CD/R3;
- Elimination of all floor area limits;
- Removal of building story limits;
- Allowing ground floor residential in the CD/R3 District; and
- Increasing the height limit in the CD and CD/R3 Districts from 30 feet to 45 feet.

The goal of the zoning changes was to encourage redevelopment along the First Street corridor and bring more residents and shoppers downtown, as well as to encourage new buildings and updated architecture. A detailed report that provides additional background and information about these Downtown Zoning Code amendments can be found on the City’s website under the February 9, 2010 City Council agenda.

The recommended height limit of 30 feet appears to effectively limit commercial development to two stories and the residential height limit of 35 feet would limit projects to three stories. Reducing the height limit would also result in a number of buildings that were recently built or are currently under construction becoming nonconforming. Buildings in the CD and CD/R3 Districts that exceed 30 feet in height are located at 100 First Street (residential), 396 First Street (residential), 467

First Street (office), 343 Second Street (office), 86 Third Street (mixed-use) and 240 Third Street (mixed-use). While it is not uncommon for changes in the Zoning Code to result in some properties becoming nonconforming, there can be negative impacts related to securing loans or financing and property value. In addition, the lower height limit will reduce intensity of development and limit the amount of residential units and commercial floor area that can be built. Whether or not this would significantly impact the ability of properties the CD and CD/R3 Districts to redevelop is unknown and should be further analyzed and discussed with the public before adoption.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
B.	Require minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet that is clear of all obstructions such as signage and utility poles (consistent with streetscape plan previously implemented for north end of First Street).	Should be further studied to determine if this is a feasible requirement.

Discussion

Staff supports the goal of having wider sidewalks Downtown. Wider sidewalks improve pedestrian access and street appearance, and are appropriate for a Downtown that places a high value on maintaining and enhancing the pedestrian environment. The City currently requires a minimum public sidewalk width of five feet within the Downtown triangle, with larger widths required when necessary to match existing conditions (e.g., 7.5 feet wide along San Antonio Road) or when specified in a streetscape improvement plan (e.g., First Street Streetscape Improvement Plan). Due to the limited amount of public street right-of-way area and wide array of desired and required amenities (fire hydrants, street signs, street lamps, street trees, benches, etc.), the City defers to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to establish the minimum widths on a public sidewalk that need to be free and clear of all obstructions (minimum width of 48 inches with a minimum pinch-point width of 42 inches). Along Main Street and State Street, where the sidewalks are wider and there is the most intensive level of pedestrian activity, the City standard is that a minimum width of five feet must be free and clear of all obstructions.

However, there are practical and physical limitations that could make requiring a width of six feet that is free and clear of all obstructions infeasible along many of the streets within the Downtown triangle. For example, the numbered streets (First, Second, Third and Fourth) all have a right-of-way width of 50 feet. It is not possible to provide all the necessary amenities for a downtown street (two travel lanes, parking spaces, landscape and street tree areas), as well as locating fire hydrants, street signs and street lamps, and still have a six-foot wide sidewalk that is free and clear of all obstructions. A wider right-of-way, or removal of other elements such as on-street parking, would be necessary to accommodate this requirement. It should also be noted that while the First Street Streetscape Plan seeks a minimum sidewalk width of six feet, it is not free of all obstructions since lamp posts and street trees are accommodated in the sidewalk area. For these reasons, staff supports the goal of providing sidewalks that are at least six feet in width, but is concerned that it is not feasible to require that the full sidewalk width be free and clear of all obstructions.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
C.	Amend 14.44.130 – Design Control (CD) and 14.52.110 – Design Control (CD/R3) to read (at B.2) “Every building over 50 feet wide....” and amend B.2.i. to read “A change of plane, effecting changes in both the horizontal and vertical aspects.”	A minor change to the design controls, but should be incorporated into all Downtown zoning districts if adopted.

Discussion

The recommended change to the CD and CD/R3 District design controls would read as follows:

2. Every building over ~~seventy-five (75)~~ fifty (50) feet wide should have its perceived height and bulk reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components by:
 - i. A change of plane, effecting changes in both the horizontal and vertical aspects;
 - ii. A projection or recess;
 - iii. Varying cornice or roof lines;
 - iv. Other similar means.

This is a relatively minor change that would not significantly alter how this particular design control is applied. However, if this is a desired recommendation, it should be incorporated into the design controls for all Downtown zoning districts to ensure consistency.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
D.	Require setback of building exterior at about the elevation of any third-floor plate to reduce mass and enhance village character.	Potentially a good idea that deserves additional analysis and public input.

Discussion

Requiring an additional setback for the third story of a building can reduce the appearance of height, bulk and mass, depending on the degree to which it is set back. There are several existing buildings in the downtown that have upper story setbacks. Some architectural styles are more conducive than others to effectively integrate upper floor setbacks into the design, and this requirement could limit the range of architectural styles that are used Downtown. In addition, if the Downtown height limit is reduced as recommended above, this requirement may not be necessary to achieve the desired result of buildings with reduced bulk and mass. However, this is policy decision that should be based on what is most consistent with the City’s design goals and objectives for Downtown; good design can occur with or without a third-story setback requirement.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
E.	Through development requirements or guidelines, encourage variation in building-entrance configuration, to avoid a “tunnel” that would result from having all buildings constructed to the minimum setback.	The Guidelines and design controls currently address this issue.

Discussion

The Downtown Design Guidelines and zoning district design controls currently include a number of recommendations and requirements that address building design related to articulation, bulk, rhythm and scale, as well as building facade treatments and entrances. For example, the CD District Design Controls require that “the proportions of building elements, especially those at ground level, should be kept close to human scale by using recesses, courtyards, entries, or outdoor spaces along the perimeter of the building to define the underlying fifty (50) foot front lot frontage.” Within the Design Guidelines, for example, projects are encouraged to “break large buildings up into smaller components,” “vary storefront treatments,” and “provide entry vestibules.” Given the depth to which the Design Guidelines and design controls already address this issue, along with the Committee’s other recommendations, additional requirements do not appear necessary to reasonably address the concern of creating a “tunnel” along Downtown streets.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
F.	Where property adjoins public right-of-way, require setback up to 5 feet if needed to create safe pedestrian/resident/customer walkways, with suitable landscaping.	Should be further studied to determine design and economic impacts.

Discussion

Staff supports the concept of requiring wide sidewalks, generous landscaping and ample amenities to enhance the pedestrian experience within the Downtown triangle. However, the concept of placing the front of a building at the back of the sidewalk is an important design principal for downtown settings and appears to be the prevailing pattern throughout Downtown. It is important for a new project to be compatible with the surrounding context and setbacks of adjacent buildings. Also, an increased setback at the ground level reduces the building size, which may affect the property’s economics. Thus, the concept of increasing the front yard setback for new development should be further evaluated before adoption.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
2.	Amend code sections 14.66.240 - Height Limitations- Exceptions and 14.02.070 – Definitions	This is a policy decision about how tower elements are incorporated in a building’s architecture and if they should be encouraged Downtown. Staff is neutral on these recommendations.
G.	Sec. 14.66.240(A) to apply only to flagpoles, radio and television antennas, and transmission towers.	
H.	Move towers, spires, cupolas, and chimney to 14.66.240(E) to cover all architectural features and elements that have aesthetic, screening, or green energy (e.g. solar panel) purposes.	
I.	Limit height for such elements and features to 8 feet above maximum height for the building (e.g. 30 + 8 or 35 + 8, as applicable), measured from lot grade.	
J.	Discourage use of such features if they have the general effect of increasing perceived height and mass.	
K.	Remove language in guidelines and plans that encourage towers (Downtown Design Plan p. 11, 22, 35). Add tower	

	definition and penthouse definitions to code and clarify not to be habitable or commercial space.	
3.	Amend and supplement the language and photographic examples in the Downtown Design Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines or their successor documents	
L.	Provide better of examples of desirable looks and articulations; delete inapplicable photo of tower.	

Discussion

When the City adopted the Downtown Urban Design Plan in 1992, currently known as the Downtown Design Plan, the use of tower elements at appropriate locations to improve the visibility of Downtown and highlight an entry point was encouraged. The Downtown Design Guidelines, which were adopted in 2009, built upon this document and provided additional parameters for the use of appropriate tower elements within a design.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
4.	Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review” and corresponding Staff Report	Good ideas that can be implemented administratively.
M.	Item 5, “Building Elevations,” require all exceptions to height limits, whether maximum height or exceptions under 14.66.240 be called out on elevations and that exceptions under 14.66.240 be shown on one or more elevations.	
N.	Amend current Staff Report cover sheet to indicate whether proposal meets height limits and what exceptions are called for per 14.66.240.	

Discussion

These are minor changes that would be simple to implement and could help decision-makers and the general public better understand the true height of a new project.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
5.	Acquire and apply expertise in light/shadow modeling for proposed developments	This idea should be further analyzed to determine if shade and shadow analysis is an appropriate tool to use when evaluating Downtown development.
O.	Consult a specialist who understands daylight/shadow impacts in a commercial setting. Identify the tools and develop a process for evaluating the impact of proposed developments on the streetscape, sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscape plans. Create a process for including such evaluation in the decision-making process.	

Discussion

The concept of evaluating the potential shadowing of a new development is usually reserved for taller projects when there is a specific concern or anticipated impact and is also not addressed in the General Plan, the Downtown Design Plan, the Zoning Ordinance or any other adopted plans. In

general, any new building, or new trees for that matter, will increase the amount of shadowing on its surroundings. The orientation and topography of the site, and the relationship to adjacent buildings and street network all factor in to the extent of a project's shade and shadow impacts. But in the Downtown setting, where new development generally fills a site and there is a relatively low height limit, it is unclear what benefit would be provided from a shadow study. Certain sites, such as those fronting on north/south-oriented streets, will inevitably cast longer shadows than sites that front on east/west-oriented streets. This could mean some properties would be required to have lower heights than other sites in the same zone district in order to minimize issues related to shadowing.

The evaluation of shade and shadows can be effective when there are specific parameters established. But it is also important to identify the problem that a shade and shadow analysis would address. Based on the layout of Downtown and the small parcel sizes, staff would encourage a focus on tools such as height limit regulation, that are more uniform and equal in application, as a way to address concerns surrounding daylight and shadowing.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
6.	Protect Views	This is a new concept that should be further analyzed and vetted through a public hearing process to understand if protecting views is feasible and desirable.
P.	Amend zoning and/or building guidelines to preserve current remaining views of surrounding hills and open spaces.	
Q.	Provide examples of which specific views to be given special emphasis for protection.	
R.	Identify the views to be protected, in consultation with experts, starting with the view corridors southbound on San Antonio Avenue, Edith Avenue, and Main and State Streets.	

Discussion

The City, and specifically the Downtown triangle, is located in proximity to the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Views to the surrounding hills help frame the Downtown when viewed from a distance and create a strong context and sense of place when in and around Downtown. However, the concept of protecting views toward the foothills is not addressed in the City's General Plan and faces a number of issues, both legal and practical, if it is to be a requirement for new development. Any new development that increases the height beyond that of the existing building will constrict views toward the surrounding hills to some degree. From a legal perspective, it is very challenging to limit the size or height of a new project in order to protect views over and across that property, unless there is a specific easement that has been granted.

The context of the Downtown's location in relation to the surrounding hills is an enduring attribute that helps create its sense of place, but it is not dependent on any one view from any particular location. As you walk or drive around Downtown, that sense of place remains, whether or not you have a continuous view of the surrounding hills. In addition, view protection regulations, such as the Town of Woodside's Scenic Corridor ordinance, typically focus on what is built on the hills in the protected view shed, not on the built environment with the view toward the hills.

Overall, due to the complex and challenging nature of this type of regulation, staff would encourage the use of other tools, such as adjusting the height limit, as a more uniform and equal way to address the concept of protecting views, if it is so desired.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
7.	Improve landscape requirements throughout the downtown and perimeter districts	Landscape plans for commercial and residential projects are currently required and review by a certified arborist may not achieve the desired result.
S.	Include landscaping plans for commercial and residential projects in the downtown area in the Project Submittal Checklist. The plan shall be reviewed and approved by the certified City of Los Altos Arborist.	

Discussion

Landscape plans are currently required as part of any commercial or residential development project that requires design review. Page three of the Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review submittal requirements handout (Attachment E) provides a list of the details that need to be incorporated into a project’s landscape plan. Currently, Planning staff reviews landscape plans prior to public review. While staff does consult with the City Arborist to discuss tree-related issues as necessary (tree placement, species, size, etc.), a certified arborist would not be the most appropriate professional to review a landscape plan. A licensed landscape architect would be more appropriate to provide a peer review of a landscape plan.

Landscape plans prepared for the development review process are more preliminary in nature and designed to be understood by the public. As long as the City’s parameters and expectations are clear, Planning staff is capable of providing a thorough review. In addition, there are multiple opportunities for the public to review and comment on a landscape plan during the design review process. Therefore, requiring landscaping plans be reviewed and approved by an arborist, or other outside professional, may be of limited value in terms of improving the design of a project’s landscaping.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
T.	Trees along streets in the downtown area should have a height of 8 feet when planted and a canopy which is at least 15-25 feet in diameter 8-10 years after being planted. All trees should be properly watered and maintained to ensure proper growth and health of tree.	Support requiring a minimum height for newly planted street trees, with further analysis needed to determine appropriate height.
U.	Require trees to be planted along streets every 15-20 feet.	Spacing should be based on type of tree species.

Discussion

Given the range in height of new trees within a certain size category (e.g., 24-inch box), the recommendation to require a minimum height for newly planted trees is a good idea. In general, a minimum height of eight feet appears to be a good threshold, but for some smaller types of trees, such as a Crape Myrtle, this may be too high. Thus, additional analysis should be conducted to determine a good minimum height requirement, based on species, for new street trees.

Regarding spacing a species, the Chinese Pistache, which is the primary street tree with the Downtown triangle, grows to a height of 25–35 feet and a canopy of 25–35 feet at maturity. Along Main Street and State Street, and in many of the public parking plazas, these trees are planted with a

spacing of 20-25 feet. In general, spacing should be based on tree species to ensure that the tree has adequate space to grow a mature canopy without being crowded. The City has always encouraged the planting of trees along streets, both residential and commercial, and staff reviews spacing based on the tree species that are proposed, with the underlying objective to have a contiguous canopy once trees reach maturity. Also, visibility of a building frontage and its signage should be considered. Excessive tree canopy can have a negative impact on the adjacent businesses. Therefore, staff recommends maintaining the current practice of evaluating tree spacing based on best practices for the species and the proposed location. Regarding street tree maintenance and watering, City Maintenance staff manages and maintains all the existing trees Downtown within the public right-of-way and public parking plazas.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
V.	Implement companion plantings that will help fill in and hide the tree well.	Potentially good ideas, but should be further evaluated to determine appropriate balance between high landscape design expectations and not limiting good design with overly prescriptive regulation.
W.	Define “abundant,” “substantial,” generous, “extensive,” “inviting” and similar terms from Downtown Guidelines to describe required landscaping and enforce them.	
X.	Increase landscaping in the front of buildings, which may require increasing front setback from 2 to 5 feet or through the development process.	
Y.	Create a list of suggested plants for the builder to consider when finalizing the landscaping design. The suggested plants will help provide continuity to the downtown experience.	

Discussion

This group of recommendations seeks to increase the amount of landscaping provided by a new development, increase the front yard setback and make the threshold for approving landscape plans more prescriptive. In general, ample landscaping and street trees as a component of new development is strongly supported by the General Plan, Zoning Code and Downtown Design Guidelines. But, there are many different ways to successfully create a generous and inviting landscape as part of a new project, and depending on where the site is located within the Downtown triangle, different amounts of landscaping and street trees may be appropriate. For example, creating landscape buffers along surface parking lots and blank building walls is appropriate, but requiring increased landscaping along the primary building frontage and requiring it to be further setback from the sidewalk could be counter to the goal of creating continuous building frontages that engage pedestrians and showcase the business within the building. In addition, hardscape features such as plazas, paseos, courtyards and fountains may be desired and acceptable alternatives to passive landscape areas depending on where the project is located.

Landscaping requirements should not seek a “one size fits all” approach. The requirements should allow for creatively designed landscaping that enhances the pedestrian experience, complements the development, and reflects the size and shape of the site. Based on the existing policies and Zoning Code requirements, the City will continue to expect and require high quality and abundant landscaping and street trees for new development. However, creating overly prescriptive and specific landscape requirements, absent a streetscape plan and/or Downtown-wide landscape and street tree

plan, could conflict with other design requirements and result in additional exceptions being requested.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
Z.	Enforce the maintenance of landscaping.	To the degree feasible, this is a staff priority.

Discussion

For new development, maintenance of landscaping is a requirement. And, when a building permit includes a facade or tenant improvement, it is reviewed by Planning staff and maintenance or replanting of landscaping is a condition of approval. However, it can be more challenging to compel property owners of older commercial buildings to refurbish or replant landscape areas that have been long neglected. Overall, ensuring that landscaping within the Downtown is maintained is an ongoing staff priority.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
AA.	Incorporate requirements for amenities and landscaping in the anticipated streetscape plan for First Street between Main Street and San Antonio Road.	Staff is neutral on this recommendation.

Discussion

Once the overhead utilities along First Street, between Main Street and San Antonio Road, are undergrounded, there may be an opportunity to design and implement a streetscape improvement plan. However, the funding and timing of this project could be considered by the City Council as a Capital Improvement Program project.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
8.	Ensure that the color and texture of exterior finishes reflect an appropriate relationship	Good idea that supports existing requirements in the zoning design controls.
BB.	Modify the required findings by adding the following: "Exterior materials, finishes and colors used serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and in the downtown village". The current required finding "D" should be amended to insert the word "high" immediately before "quality": "Exterior materials and finishes convey <u>high</u> quality, integrity..."	

Discussion

The required design review findings referenced above are located in Section 14.78.050 of the Zoning Code and serve as the basis for any commercial and multiple-family design review approval. The concepts of reducing the perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass are incorporated into the City's design review findings for single-family residential projects and are referenced in the design controls for each of the Downtown commercial districts (CRS, CRS/OAD, CD and CD/R3), but not explicitly included in the general design review findings. Since the objective of reducing the

perception of a project’s height and bulk is already included in the design controls for each of the City’s commercial zone district, it is appropriate to support this in the general design review findings. Also, the City always expects new development to use high quality finishes and exterior materials, so this modification would support a longstanding City expectation.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
CC.	Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review” and/or the Design Guidelines to require that proposed buildings in the Downtown district be modeled using 3D and other forms of digital simulation that depict the Materials Board and allow for closer consideration of proposed colors and textures of exterior finishes in context. Submission of a physical Materials Board of samples of colors, materials and finishes should be made a formal requirement and should be included in the submission requirement checklist. Submission of larger scale samples and/or examples of uses of the materials and finishes in prior projects should be required for materials and finishes not in common use in the Downtown district.	These requirements were implemented in March, 2015.

Discussion

Based on feedback received from members of the public, the Planning and Transportation Commission and the City Council, staff updated the submittal requirements for new development applications to include a 3D model and require larger scale samples of materials. This requirement was added in March of 2015. A copy of the submittal requirements handout for Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review is included in Attachment E. The specific sections that address material boards and the 3D model requirements are on page one of the handout.

Documents, Policy and Procedures

The recommendations in this report focus on the Downtown Design Guidelines, documentation related to the design review process, policies and Zoning Codes related to Downtown, the overall public review and approval process for new development Downtown. The report is included in Attachment B. Each of the Committee’s recommendations is listed below, with the staff comment to the right and a discussion of the issue provided below.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
1.	Documentation	Since the Guidelines are not codified, it may not be appropriate to rename them requirements. Staff supports updating the Guidelines for consistency and clarity.
A.1	Rename “Design Guidelines” to “Design Requirements” to indicate they have teeth (enforceable). Edit for clarification, consistency and future interactive online use.	

Discussion

Prior to the Downtown zoning changes, the City developed and adopted a set of design guidelines for Downtown that consolidated and clarified the existing design-related ideas contained in the General Plan, Downtown Design Plan and design controls within the Zoning Code. The intent was to graphically represent the City's existing design regulations, make them easier to understand and help guide expectations for new development Downtown. A detailed report that provides additional background about the Downtown Design Guidelines can be found on the City's website under the December 8, 2009 City Council agenda. For reference, a copy of the Downtown Design Guidelines is included as Attachment F.

The use of the term guidelines as part of the title is appropriate since the Downtown Design Guidelines are exactly that, guidelines. This allows for an understanding that every design recommendation outlined in the document is not expected to be incorporated into every project. By contrast, when something is identified as being a requirement, it is generally codified and not flexible. Staff understands the concerns raised by the Committee, including that the Downtown Design Guidelines have not been sufficiently adhered to as projects are reviewed and approved. Recommendation A.2 will improve enforceability and require a new development to provide justification when it is not adhering to a recommendation within the Guidelines. However, using the term "requirements" in place of "guidelines" could create confusion and false expectations about how they are applied. A variance or exception is legally required if a project does not follow a codified requirement. Staff is concerned that retitling to "Design Requirements" would create an expectation that a variance or exception would be required if a project does not follow one or more of the recommendations in the Guidelines.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
A.2	Add a checklist to make it easy for developers (and planners) to ensure project is conforming.	Good idea that staff can implement administratively.

Discussion

Developing a checklist based on the recommendations outlined in the Design Guidelines and requiring it with the submittal of a new application will be a useful tool for applicants, staff and decision-makers. For applicants, it will require that they think about how their project meets the intent of the City's design expectations as the design is developed. For staff and decision-makers, it will help focus the project evaluation and ensure that all elements of the Design Guidelines are discussed. While a checklist in and of itself does not make for better design, it will be a good tool that could enhance the effectiveness of the design review process.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
A.3	Simplify: Combine Chapter 4 (Mixed Commercial District) and Chapter 5 (First Street District) into a new Chapter 4 (Perimeter District).	Good idea that could be incorporated into a future version of the Guidelines.

Discussion

These two Districts, as described within the Design Guidelines, have very similar design recommendations and combining them would simplify and shorten the document. However,

functionally, these Districts have meaningful differences. The First Street corridor is the Downtown's edge to Foothill Expressway, has many lots that are functionally shallow and, within the CD/R3 District, allows for all residential projects. The south Downtown triangle, which is the commercial area south of Main Street and bordered by First Street and San Antonio Road, has predominately commercial office buildings that support the Downtown core and does not allow for ground floor residential uses. So, it may be appropriate to identify these differences between these two Districts within the Design Guidelines and adjust the design recommendations accordingly. But, the Design Guidelines would continue to be effective in guiding good design if the Districts were combined into a single perimeter District.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
B.	Ensure consistent terminology throughout all documents.	Good ideas that staff can implement administratively.
C.	Keep all documents current and discard those that are obsolete.	
D.	Make the zoning code the single source for explicit, measurable requirements. Consider one source document for each subject.	
E.	Make more use of illustrations and diagrams in all documents.	
F.	Make all documents interactive online with links to relevant city codes.	
2.	Process/Procedures	
G.	Include more detailed checklists at all phases of planning process. Follow the example of the Los Gatos project application checklist.	

Discussion

Staff is supportive of exploring ways to clarify the review process and provide additional information that ensures the City's goals and expectations for new development is clearly understood. To give the Commission an example of the current handout that is available related to commercial/multiple-family submittal requirements, see Attachment E. This handout is updated as necessary to clearly and accurately convey the City's submittal requirements. Staff is also in the process of developing a flowchart that outlines the development review process for perspective developers and interested residents.

Overall, there is always opportunity to clarify, improve and enhance the process and the support documentation. The feedback and commentary provided by the Committee will be helpful to staff as the Downtown Design Guidelines, Zoning Code and other documents are updated and clarified.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
H.	Require 3D modeling submission (e.g. Sketch Up software or similar) for every project.	Addressed in 8.CC.

Discussion

As noted in recommendation 8.CC, the City currently requires all new development to include a 3D model with their application.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
I.	Select an ad-hoc panel of consulting architects and landscape architects (paid by developer) to review all commercial and multi-family projects early in the design phase. Comprising 2 architects and 1 landscape architect, the panel would review each project – focused solely on design – in an advisory capacity.	This idea should be further analyzed to understand costs and benefits.

Discussion

The concept of using a consulting architect or a panel of architects to provide a peer review of a development application is used by a number of jurisdictions around the Bay Area and can be successful in supporting good design. However, this requirement will also add costs to the developer and result in a longer design review process. If the City seeks to add this to the design review process, there are a number of questions should be answered first, such as where in the process will this review take place, what are the objectives of the peer review, how many professional architects should be included, and how are differences in opinion between the reviewing architect(s) and City commissions resolved? It is important to make sure that process has clear parameters and objectives before it is adopted. Thus, staff would recommend that the recommendation be further analyzed to understand costs and benefits if the decision-makers are interested in adopting it, with the desire to keep the process as simple and transparent as possible.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
J.	Revise the existing planning page on the city website to include all steps in the process (including study sessions) and provide links to relevant documents.	Good ideas that staff can implement administratively.
K.	Allow developers to make submissions online.	
4.	Empowerment/Enforcement/Accountability	
L.	Clearly define, communicate and enforce our city standards.	

Discussion

In general, these are overarching goals and objectives that staff supports. The City recently updated its website to better serve the community and continues to explore new ways to use online tools and technology to meet the needs of residents and applicants. However, since Los Altos is a smaller city with limited staff and resources, we may not be able to provide the range of online tools and resources provided by larger jurisdictions. Overall, staff is committed to making every effort to use the website and online tools to meet the needs of the community.

DBC Recommendation		Staff Comment
5.	Downtown Plan	Staff is neutral on this recommendation.
M.	Support the visioning process that will lead to a master plan for downtown. Codify the plan.	

Discussion

The scope and timing of the Downtown visioning process is a policy and priority choice that rests with the City Council.

NEXT STEPS

Once the Planning and Transportation Commission reviews the Committee’s reports and makes its recommendations, both the Committee and Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for final action. Based on the final action taken by the Council, staff will develop a work plan that outlines how each of the approved recommendations will be implemented or further studied and report back to Council.

PUBLIC CONTACT

All meetings held by the Downtown Buildings Ad Hoc Committee have been publicly noticed and open to the general public. In addition, all meeting agendas, reports and materials are posted on the City’s website and available for public review.

For the January 7, 2016 Planning and Transportation Commission meeting,

1. A public meeting display ad was published in the *Town Crier*;
2. A public meeting notice was mailed to all property owners within the Downtown triangle and within 500 feet of the Downtown triangle; and
3. A public meeting notice was mailed to the Chamber of Commerce, Los Altos Village Association and other interested groups and individuals.

Attachments:

- A. Height, Views/Shadow and the Pedestrian Experience Report
- B. Guidelines/Process and Procedures Report
- C. Abstract of Recommendations
- D. Planning and Transportation Commission Study Session Minutes, November 5, 2015 (Draft)
- E. Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review Handout
- F. Downtown Design Guidelines

ATTACHMENT A

Height, Views/Shadow and the Pedestrian Experience Report

HEIGHT, VIEWS/SHADOW, AND THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Thomas Barton, Anita Enander, Hillary Frank, Edward Infante, Teresa Morris, Denis Salmon, Nancy See

Presentation to the Planning and Transportation Commission on January 7, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Zoning changes made since 2010 have consolidated zones in the downtown area, increased some height limits, and moved the City to form-based zoning. New construction under those changes together with the First Street Streetscape changes north of the Main Street intersection provide useful examples from which to evaluate the impact of those changes, anticipate the effect of similar development, and gauge community acceptance.

Based on community reaction, some changes have already been made (e.g. how height is measured for different types of roofs).

The task of this subcommittee was to review the new(er) construction and areas of potential development in light of current zoning and guidelines, and, together with input from the committee and available community feedback, develop findings and recommend draft changes to zoning and applicable guidelines.

FINDINGS

- 1. Height limits of up to 45 feet and lack of requirements in the zoning code to reduce mass of the tallest buildings have undesirable, adverse impacts on:**
 - Village character
 - Pedestrian activity
 - Hillside views
 - Light (shadow projection on streets, sidewalks, opposing structures)
 - Landscaping (inadequate sun)
 - Human scale
- 2. A majority of residents (51%) favor no further development or development not greater than 30 feet/two stories (integrating data from Q 10 and 14 from recent survey)**
 - 23% want no additional development downtown; 28% want no more than 30 feet; 33% would allow 3 stories or 45 feet or more; 16% have various other, unidentified, opinions.

NOTE: The data presented in the survey results can be confusing without the additional information that Q14 was asked of all survey participants (n=401), but Q10 was asked ONLY of those who answered Q14 by favoring either of the two

specific locations for “Continued redevelopment...” options (n=245). Q10 thus provided more specific information about the height limits only from those who favored further development. To integrate the information into a correct statistical interpretation, Q14 results show 23.3% of the total sample (n=401) want “No additional development downtown” and 14.3 % (9.0 + 2.9 + 2.2) had mixed or no opinion. The remaining 62.6% (32.6 + 30.0) who favored some “Continued redevelopment...” were then asked Q10 regarding height, so the percentage of responses for that question shown must be multiplied by 62.6% to arrive at a correct percentage of the TOTAL survey sample with respect to opinions on additional development height: “Stay the way it is/allow 30 feet...” at $44.7 \times 62.6 = 27.9\%$ and “Allow 45 feet in height...” at $52.8 \times 62.6 = 33.1\%$. The remaining 2.7% who answered A10 with Mixed opinions, neither, and DK/NA thus need to be added ($2.7 \times 62.6 = 0.17\%$) to the “other opinions” to get a complete picture.

- 3. The primary streets of the CD and CD/R3 zones (First, Second, and Third Streets) are considerably narrower than those of the CRS zone (Main and State Streets), contributing to adverse impact of taller buildings.**
 - Exacerbates the adverse impact of taller buildings in CD and CD/R3 compared to if they were built in CRS (e.g. a building that seems of good scale on Main Street will seem out of scale on First Street, given the narrower street and narrower sidewalks).
 - Impacts include adverse shade projection, and potential tunnel effects as narrower rights of way (assuming street parking is retained) currently limit sidewalks to approximately 5 feet.

- 4. Current zoning language and guidelines are insufficient to define and limit height exceptions for parapets, chimneys, towers, skylights, penthouses, and screening walls, and such features under current code may contribute to undesired height.**
 - There is not uniform instruction on how to measure the allowable heights for such exceptions. Features with sloped roofs have been measured to the midpoint of the slope, which allows a greater maximum height and adds to the confusion.
 - Given community sensitivity to height, there is no language requiring such features be minimized.
 - Current submittal requirements call for cross sections at the “highest ridge” with no call-out of any proposed height exceptions for such features as are defined in 14.66.240.
 - Failure to call out such exceptions may result in these being overlooked or receiving insufficient attention during design review.
 - Downtown Design Guidelines describe screening of mechanical equipment only in the section for the Downtown Core at p. 17, item 7. Such requirements for Mixed Commercial and First Street Districts are by reference to the Downtown

Core. Such requirements are called out in the Municipal Code for both the CD and CD/R3 zones, contributing to duplication and, potentially, confusion.

5. **The foothills immediately southwest of the downtown provide a foundational sense of place and are a major asset. Los Altos has no zoning requirement to preserve views of these foothills.** Compass orientation of the major streets in CD and CR/R3, which roughly parallel the foothills, creates the potential for buildings in these zones to present the greatest blocking of hillside views as viewed from the major streets (e.g. southbound on San Antonio Road or W. Edith Avenue), core village (views up Main and State Streets), and other major pedestrian walkways and roadways.
6. **Compass orientation of the major streets in CD and CR/R3 also contributes to greater shadow projections on sidewalks, streets, landscaping and opposing buildings than would occur with buildings of the same height in the downtown core.** The adverse effect of shadows on plant and tree growth is significant. Los Altos currently has neither a requirement nor tools for determining the impact of shadows that would be cast by a proposed building.
7. **Under current guidelines, future development in the CD and CD/R3 zones would substantially eliminate street-facing parking on the lots, bringing building fronts near the lot-line (currently 2-foot setback for commercial) and creating even more “tunnel” effect.** Staff has indicated planning would encourage building up to the minimum setback, which is contrary to the desire to create a more open feeling on these narrow streets. By comparison, few buildings in the CRS zone are built to the lot line along their entire length, with many having recessed entries and recessed display windows, etc. The 2-foot setback required for commercial and mixed-use development in CD and CD/R also provides minimal opportunity for the quality and abundance of landscaping called for in the Guidelines.
8. **Current zoning setback language (14.44.060, .070, and .080 for CD and 14.52.060 for CD/R3) requires setbacks to be “landscaped,” but applicable guidelines (for all parts of the downtown ad perimeter) and their enforcement are insufficient.** Guidelines describe “Community Expectations” of “A high quality of traditional architectural and landscape design...” (p. 7). The Downtown Design Guidelines provide additional guidance for the Mixed Commercial District (p. 59) and First Street District (p. 66-67), which together cover the CD and CD/R3 zones, but there are substantial challenges with narrow setbacks and the adverse shadow effects described above. The Downtown Design Plan (p. 40) does not address landscaping for the CD and CD/R3 areas, other than through general comments.

These Guidelines and their enforcement are insufficient, given that:

- Street trees (both newly planted and more mature) are inconsistent in size and quality

- Lack of fill-in plantings in tree wells contribute to the sense of bareness
- Walls and non-transparent surfaces are rarely softened with effective plantings (as required p. 26)
- Landscaping is sparse in many areas, the apparent result of neglect or of selecting plants that cannot thrive given the paucity of light resulting from building orientation or shadows from adjacent/opposing buildings.

9. The quality of building materials can contribute significantly to a welcoming pedestrian experience and to maintaining the village character of Los Altos. Current practice is not well codified, and existing guidelines are inadequate.

The current Design Review process requires the following finding:

“D. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.”

The quality of exteriors on the new buildings which have been the focus of Committee discussions have generally been viewed favorably, with the exception of the residential project at 396 First Street, which, in addition to drawing criticism for its height and bulk, is viewed as having exterior materials and finishes that fall below the desired level of quality and integrity.

The community is highly dependent on staff for the evaluation of proposed materials because no regulation or guideline was found that specifies acceptable – or prohibits any unacceptable – colors and textures or types of exterior finishes for buildings in the Downtown area. The Downtown Design Plan includes the statement that “Color schemes should be harmonious with surrounding structures and consistent with the original time period of the building.” The Downtown Design Guidelines include a reference to a “wide variety of natural materials” as one feature of Village Character (p. 11) and warn that “Corporate Architecture” will not be approved with “...materials, or colors that do not relate to the site, adjacent development, or Los Altos’ community character” (p. 23). Guidelines for the First Street District (p. 68) refer to use of “materials that are common in the downtown core.”

Current Submittal Requirements for design review require a Materials Board with color photos of exterior materials as well as a color rendering and 3D digital model. There is no Guideline that specifically addresses the requirement for material and color samples or the requirement for digital or 3D modeling assist in the evaluation of materials/colors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Amend zoning height and design control for CD and CD/R3 and require wider, clear sidewalks**
 - A. Amend 14.44.120 – Height of structures (CD) to read “No structure shall exceed 30 feet in height...” Amend 14.52.100 Height of structures (CD/R3) to limit height to 35 feet “For entirely residential projects” and to 30 feet “For mixed-use and commercial projects” as defined in 14.52.060 – Required building setbacks (CD/R3).
 - B. Require minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet that is clear of all obstructions such as signage and utility poles (consistent with streetscape plan previously implemented for north end of First Street). This may require dedication of approximately 1 foot as properties are developed. This recommendation should be incorporated in any future streetscape plan for the portion of First Street from Main Street to San Antonio Road, but this recommendation should not be dependent on the development or implementation of such plan.
 - C. Amend 14.44.130 – Design Control (CD) and 14.52.110 – Design control (CD/R3) to read (at B.2) “Every building over 50 feet wide...” and amend B.2.i. to read “A change of plane, effecting changes in both the horizontal and vertical aspects.”
 - D. Require setback of building exterior at about the elevation of any third-floor plate to reduce mass and enhance village character. Setbacks/recesses/articulations should be consistent with architectural design but should create the impression that much of the front and sides are recessed for any third floor. Specifying that the footprint of the top floor be not more than some percentage of the area beneath may be helpful. The purpose is to avoid full-height, solid vertical walls along pedestrian walkways, while providing visual interest of human scale and reducing the apparent height and bulk.
 - E. Through development requirements or guidelines, encourage variation in building-entrance configuration, to avoid a “tunnel” that would result from having all buildings constructed to the minimum setback. Encourage creative articulations at street level rather than encouraging building to the lot line.
 - F. Where code currently requires side or rear setback of 2 feet where property adjoins public right of way (e.g. “where the side property line of a site abuts a public street or a public parking plaza” such as found at 14.44.070, 14.44.080 and 14.52.060) change language to require setback of at least 2 and as much as 5 feet if needed to create safe pedestrian/resident/customer walkways, supplemented with suitable landscaping. Landscape-only requirements for 2-foot setbacks are appropriate only if there are otherwise safe walkways.

2. **Amend code sections 14.66.240 - Height Limitations – Exceptions and 14.02.070 - Definitions.**
 - G. Such that 14.66.240(A) applies only to flagpoles, radio and television antennas and transmission towers.

- H. Move towers, spires, cupolas, and chimneys from 14.66.240(A) to 14.66.240(E), so that the latter sub-section covers all architectural features that have aesthetic or screening purposes, of which none may be used for dwelling or commercial or advertising purposes.
- I. Establish maximum height of all such at 8 feet, measured at the highest point. The practical effect is that no such feature would be more than 38 feet (if 30-foot building height) or 43 feet (if 35-foot building height), measured above the specified lot grade for the building.
- J. Actively discourage the use of such features if they have the general effect of increasing perceived height and mass; guidelines should recommend that features be set back from the edges of the building, where consistent with design, to minimize perceived building height.
- K. Remove language in guidelines and plans that encourage towers (Downtown Design Plan p. 11, 22, 35). Add tower definition to 14.02.070. Add penthouse definition to clarify that this is not habitable or commercial space but is intended to provide an architecturally pleasing cover to stairwells, elevator equipment, etc.

3. Amend and supplement the language and photographic examples in the Downtown Design Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines or their successor documents

- L. Provide better examples of desirable looks and articulations, including breaking up long walls with entries and architectural features. Delete inapplicable photo of tower at p. 68; add others.

4. Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review” and corresponding Staff Report

- M. In item 5, “Building Elevations,” require that all exceptions to height limits, whether for maximum height or exceptions under 14.66.240 be called out on elevations. Further, require that maximum heights of any feature for which a height exception is claimed under 14.66.240 be shown on one or more elevation.
- N. Amend current Staff Report cover sheet to indicate whether proposal meets height limits and what exceptions are called for per 14.66.240.

5. Acquire and apply expertise in light/shadow modeling for proposed developments

- O. Consult a specialist who understands daylight/shadow impacts in a commercial setting. Identify the tools and develop a process for evaluating the impact of proposed developments on the streetscape, sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscape plans. Create a process for including such evaluation in the decision-making process. NOTE: Palo Alto has recently used such expertise to resolve concerns over shadows. See Appendix J at p. 630 <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/49911>

An animated example of a shade study is at http://gardenbleu.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/shadow-study_Feb20.gif

6. Protect views

- P. The preservation of existing views of the surrounding hills and open spaces from Downtown should be included in the Design Review process for buildings in the Downtown area. This is needed to prevent blocking or obstructing remaining views of surrounding hills and tree canopy. Language to protect these views needs to be incorporated into zoning or Guidelines and should be as clear and specific as possible. Example 1: "Views to the surrounding hills should be maintained especially at signalized intersections." (Los Gatos Commercial Guidelines, pg. 42, # 5A.1 <http://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/325>) Example 2: SCENIC CORRIDORS. (a) Lands visible (if currently visible, or if visible if existing vegetation was removed) from the driving surface of the following (state-designated) scenic highways: ...(Town of Woodside 153.221)
- Q. Provide examples of which specific views to be given special emphasis for protection. These examples need to be included in the Design Guidelines. Photographic examples are strongly recommended.
- R. Identify the views to be protected, in consultation with experts, starting with the view corridors southbound on San Antonio Avenue, Edith Avenue, and Main and State Streets.

7. Improve landscape requirements throughout the downtown and perimeter districts

- S. In order to ensure viability of landscaping proposals, all landscaping plans for commercial and residential projects in the downtown area must be included in the Project Submittal Checklist. These plans must then be reviewed and approved by the certified City of Los Altos Arborist.
- T. Trees along streets in the downtown area should have a height of 8' when planted and a canopy which is at least 15-25' in diameter 8-10 years after being planted. All trees should be properly watered and maintained to ensure proper growth and health of tree.
- U. Require trees to be planted along streets every 15-20'.
- V. Implement companion plantings that will help fill in and hide the tree well.
- W. "Abundant," "substantial," "generous," "extensive," "inviting," and similar terms are used in the Downtown Guidelines to describe required landscaping (e.g. p. 11, 17, 18, 54, 59, 70). These terms need to be further defined and then fully enforced.
- X. Increase landscaping in the front of buildings. This can be done by increasing front setback from current 2 to 5 feet for CD and CD/R3 mixed use buildings or requiring landscaping through the development process with, for example, wider planting beds or 4-foot cutouts as seen in front of the Packard

- Foundation building. In addition, consider adding a front setback requirement to the CRS zone or other changes to ensure space for landscape planting.
- Y. Create a list of suggested plants for the builder to consider when finalizing the landscape design. The suggested plants will help provide continuity to the downtown experience. The list should be developed by the city arborist and gardening staff. The list should include sections that address all micro-climates of the downtown area. Some example areas to consider are: shade areas, full-sun areas, and areas adjacent to parking lots and driveways.
 - Z. Enforce the maintenance of all landscaping once it is planted to ensure that dead and dying landscaping is removed and replaced with plants that have previously been approved for the specific location.
 - AA. Requirements for amenities and landscaping in the setback and along building fronts should be incorporated in the anticipated streetscape plan for First Street between Main and San Antonio, and such plan should encourage additional setbacks for landscaping.

8. Ensure that the color and texture of exterior finishes reflect an appropriate relationship with other buildings, are consistent with the village character, and coordinate with other architectural elements to minimize apparent height, bulk, and mass.

- BB. Modify the required findings by adding the following: “Exterior materials, finishes and colors used serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and in the downtown village.” In addition, the current required finding “D” should be amended to insert the word “**high**” immediately before “quality”: “Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity...”
- CC. Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review” and/or the Design Guidelines to require that proposed buildings in the Downtown district be modeled using 3D and other forms of digital simulation that depict the Materials Board and allow for closer consideration of proposed colors and textures of exterior finishes in context. Submission of a physical Materials Board of samples of colors, materials and finishes should be made a formal requirement and should be included in the submission requirement checklist. Submission of larger scale samples and/or examples of uses of the materials and finishes in prior projects should be required for materials and finishes not in common use in the Downtown district.

OUTCOMES

The goal of these changes is to create attractive developments outside the downtown “core” that minimize bulk and height consistent with commercial development, preserve views of the foothills from downtown for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicle drivers, and invite people to explore the village beyond the core through better attention to light and shadow, walkways, and landscaping.

A pedestrian walking down Main or State Streets who reaches the First Street intersection should be drawn to turn left at the corner and explore further.

1. Height and Design Control Changes

Reducing the maximum height in both the CD/R3 and CD zones will:

- Within form-based zoning, have the practical effect to keep all buildings in Downtown Los Altos Zones at a height that supports the ‘village character’ with structures that are similar in scale to those in the surrounding area.
- Mitigate the bulk and shadow effects of the taller (35’) buildings because they will only be permitted where 10’ setbacks are otherwise required.
- Eliminate the potential of narrow streets being lined on both sides with tall (45 foot) buildings, creating a ‘tunnel’ effect with extreme shadows and a feeling of constriction.
- Preserve remaining hillside views.

Allow commercial development to maintain 12’ 1st floor ceiling height in retail space; allow three-story residential in some forms.

Maximum 8’ height for towers, spires, cupolas, chimneys, penthouses, parapets, mechanical screening will:

- Limit the maximum overall height of any building feature to 38’-43’ from current potential maximum of 60’.
- Minimize the size of these components to what is functionally necessary for the building.
- Reduce potential interference with skyline and foothill views.
- By requiring call-out on plan submittal, enable staff readily to identify potential issues.

By requiring comment on Staff Report cover, will alert PTC and Council to height compliance/exceptions.

Developing language to protect existing views, together with modeling to evaluate the impact of each project, will preserve a unique asset of Los Altos – the beautiful sense of place near the base of the foothills.

Incorporating requirements for shadow studies will allow better decision-making regarding impact on the downtown, including on sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscaping.

2. Dedication for sidewalks and other setback/articulation requirements

Establishing a minimum, clear 6-foot sidewalk will:

- Provide greater consistency in sidewalks between streets and downtown districts that will encourage pedestrian traffic to flow easily from one street to

another and to move beyond the downtown core. Will bring south end of First Street sidewalks into conformance with those implemented on the north end through the completed streetscape plan.

- Improve the visual appeal and pedestrian orientation of the downtown as called for in the design guidelines.
- Allow room for pedestrian traffic and amenities to coexist in areas in front of buildings, encouraging visitors and adding vibrancy to these streets.
- Modifications to side setbacks that abut public rights of way will enhance pedestrian safety.

Requiring that third stories be recessed will reduce overall building bulk and mass, especially as experienced by pedestrian and local traffic, and create visual interest consistent with the village character.

3. Design Guidelines and Definitions

Changing the Downtown Plan to reduce emphasis on towers will reduce emphasis on height exceptions and constrain features that otherwise contribute to bulk and mass. Refining the Downtown Design Guidelines for the Mixed Commercial District and First Street District (Sections 4 and 5) will provide more detailed examples of 'do's'. Currently the Downtown Design Guidelines has 32 pages of guidelines for the Downtown Core District and only 9 pages for Section 4 (CD) and 6 pages for Section 5 (CD/R3). More complete guidance will provide stronger definition and examples of what the community would like to see in the development of these districts, while reinforcing the importance of these areas.

Providing a greater set of tools, such as shadow studies, 3D modeling, analysis of impact on views, and enhanced Materials Boards, will allow PTC and Council better to assess individual projects and their impact on the greater Downtown and Perimeter areas. These tools are essential for decision-making to protect views, enhance the pedestrian experience, more accurately forecast the look of materials and colors, and guide landscape planning based on hours and type of sunlight.

4. Landscaping Guidelines

Providing more definition and enforcement of the landscape guidelines will:

- Reinforce the need to follow the landscaping guidelines.
- Assist developers in planning and installing landscape that meets community expectations as well as landscapes that will thrive in each specific setting.
- Enhance the downtown and perimeter districts, softening the effects of small or no-setback development and large walls while improving the pedestrian experience.
- Result in a downtown area that is in alignment with the guidelines.

- Contribute to upholding the intent of the Downtown Guidelines to provide fairness and consistency, break up longer facades, reinforce the village character, support a pedestrian friendly atmosphere, and contribute to human scale.

ATTACHMENT B

Guidelines/Process and Procedures Report

GUIDELINES/PROCESS & PROCEDURES SUBCOMMITTEE

PRESENTATION to PTC

Jane Reed, Deb Hope, Susan Mensinger, Pat Marriott

SUBCOMMITTEE GOALS

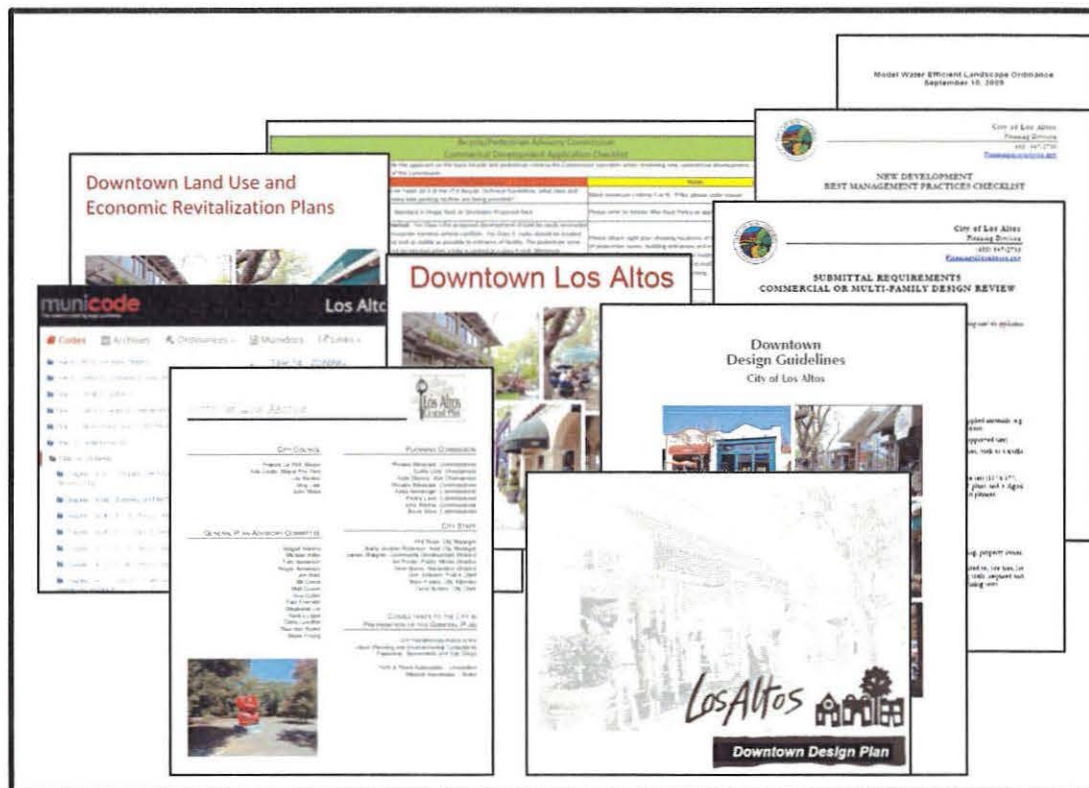
- Make commercial development smoother and more transparent for all: developers, staff, commissioners, council and residents
- Expedite the process by clearly defining community expectations
- Improve predictability: ensure there are no surprises for the developer or residents
- Get the quality development we want and deserve

CURRENT SITUATION

Lack of coherence:

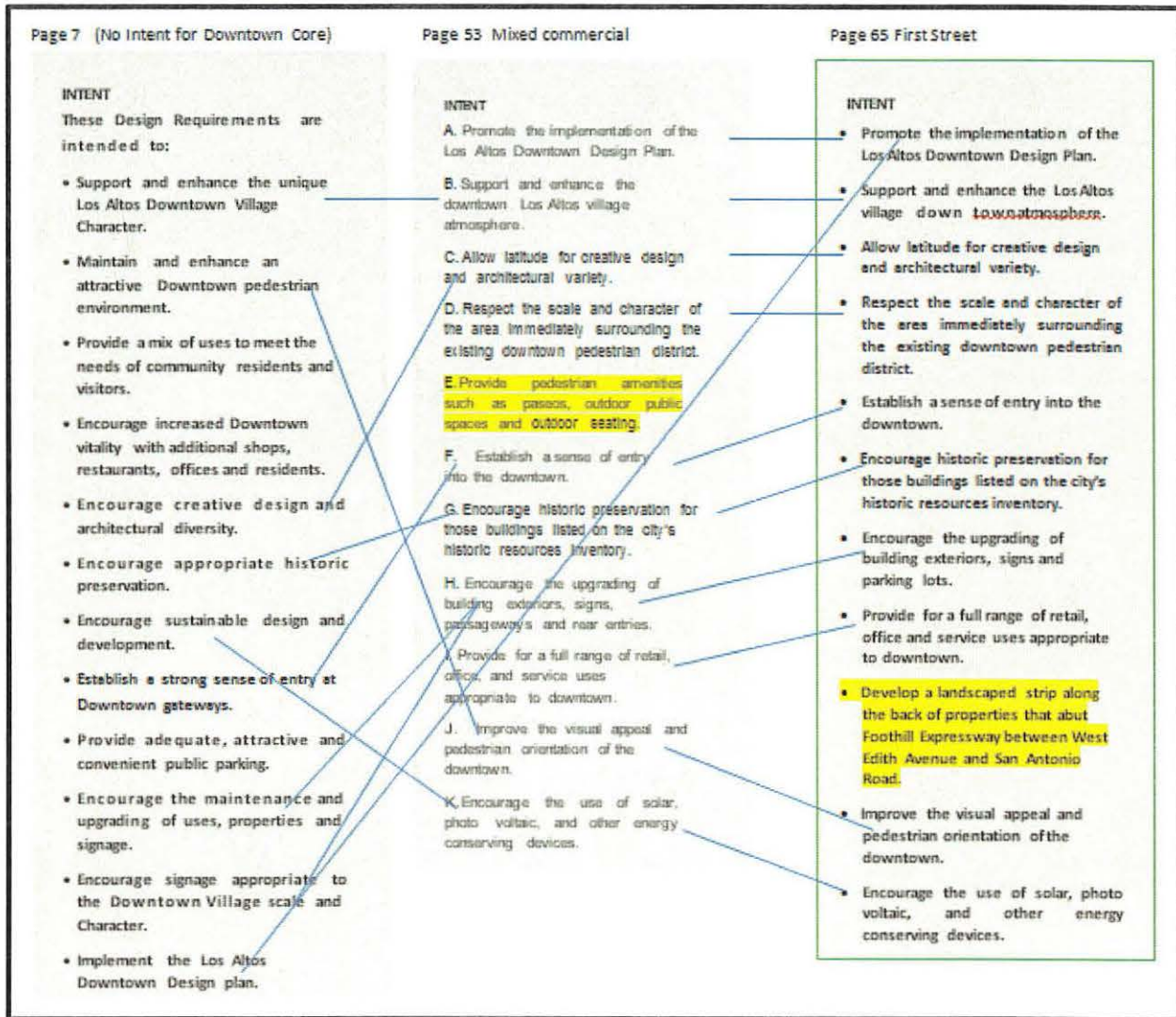
Multiple documents from multiple committees over many years are confusing.

Figure 1: Some of the documents a developer would have to consult.



These documents go back to the General Plan from 2002. Because they were written and revised over time – by different people – they can be redundant and confusing. Yet there's a consistent thread through them – and through history: the desire to keep our village atmosphere, a pedestrian focus, a human scale.

Figure 2: Statements of Intent within the Design Guidelines are repeated in a different form throughout the document, all similar to – but slightly different – from the Purpose statements in the zoning code.



The same lack of consistency is evident in the Design Guidelines text, as well as in the zoning code.

Figure 3: Examples

- Zones are referred to as districts, e.g., Chapter 14.44 - CD COMMERCIAL DOWNTOWN DISTRICT*
- Specific Purposes in zoning code are similar to Intents in Design Guidelines(Figure 2), i.e., different words in different order.
- 14.44.020 - Specific purposes (CD zone).
 - D. Preserve and improve the character of the area immediately surrounding the existing downtown pedestrian district; (There is no “downtown pedestrian district.” Should be the Downtown Core District.)

Also, while most measurable requirements (height, setbacks, etc.) are specified in the zoning code, some (courtyard and paseo dimensions) are defined in the Design Guidelines, but not in the zoning code.

Our immediate goal was to simplify the Design Guidelines and ensure consistency. But we realized that there was an additional problem.

Lack of adherence:

Most guidelines are sufficient, but have not been followed in recent commercial development, e.g., see Appendix G.

Revising one document is not the solution to the larger problem. The issue is not that the Design Guidelines are broken, but the fact that they have frequently been ignored.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Documentation

A. Design Guidelines:

Revise this document to make it more user-friendly and accessible, removing redundancy (see Figure 2 above), streamlining content and adding a checklist.

Only a few substantive changes need be made. Appendix A outlines the modifications. Key points:

- 1) Rename to “Design Requirements” to indicate they have teeth. Edit for clarification, consistency and future interactive online use.
- 2) Add a checklist to make it easy for developers (and planners) to ensure project is conforming.
- 3) Combine Chapter 4 (Mixed Commercial District) and Chapter 5 (First Street District) into a new Chapter 4 (Perimeter District) because the two chapters are practically identical.

B. Ensure consistent terminology throughout all documents.

Examples of problems are shown in Figure 3 above.

C. Keep all documents current and discard those that are obsolete.

For example, when downtown visioning takes place, it may be appropriate to discard the existing Downtown Design Plan.

D. Make the zoning code the single source for explicit, measurable requirements.

Duplicating information in multiple documents is confusing, makes updates more difficult and leads to inconsistencies.

For example, our committee was asked to define “human scale.” There already exist numerous books, papers, videos and other sources of information on this subject. An excellent example from the city of Powell Ohio provides – in just 10 pages –an overview of key factors. (See Appendix D.) Use this document or one similar to it to define our requirements for pedestrian/human scale.

E. Make more use of illustrations and diagrams in all documents.

Planning, architecture, design, landscape are all visual endeavors. A picture is worth 1,000 words, particularly when multiple people have to agree on complex development concepts. Follow the examples in appendices D, E and F to ensure detailed, unambiguous requirements.

F. Make all documents interactive online with links to relevant city codes.

The city is looking for a new IT manager. This would be an excellent project for him/her to address. A GIS mapping system (Appendix C) could be the starting point for accessing the planning system.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Process/Procedures

The city already has a good working process in place. But the push for commercial development is relatively new and many recent buildings do not reflect our village character. To tighten the process:

G. Provide precise checklists for every step of the development process.

The revised Design Requirements document now contains such a checklist. Also follow the example of the Los Gatos application checklist in Appendix F.

The more detailed the requirements and checklists, the easier it is to define what the city wants and the easier for developers to submit plans that speed through the approval process.

Precise checklists give the planning department the support it needs to strictly enforce requirements. And if the applicant ultimately demands to go to the PTC without staff support, the PTC will have the same checklists to point out lack of adherence.

H. Require 3D modeling submission (e.g., Sketchup software) for every project.

Staff has already started work on this requirement, which we strongly support.

I. Require an architectural review for every project, including commercial and multi-family.

Residential projects must go through a design review because we want to protect our neighborhoods. The same detailed focus on architecture and landscape should be required for commercial and multi-family residences, which are typically seen by more people and have a bigger impact on the community.

Our PTC has a broad charter, advising the City Council on planning and transportation issues including “automobile circulation, pedestrian, bicycle and handicapped access, and public transportation on all public streets, roadways and paths within the city limits of the City of Los Altos. The PTC advises the Council on existing and proposed City policies related to traffic calming and traffic enforcement.” <http://www.losaltosca.gov/planningtransportcommission>

Note that there is no mention of architectural/landscape review in the job description.

We would benefit from having a panel of experts focus strictly these particulars, supporting staff in promoting harmonious development of high aesthetic quality.

Architects and developers expect such a review early in the process—and are willing to pay for it as part of the development fee—because it can save them time and money.

We recommend selecting an ad-hoc panel of consulting architects and landscape architects (paid by developer) to review all commercial and multi-family projects early in the design phase. Comprising 2 architects and 1 landscape architect, the panel would review each project – focused solely on design – in an advisory capacity. They need not be Los Altos residents.

Appendix B describes Los Gatos’ use of a single architectural consultant to review a project. Two would provide a balanced and well-informed perspective, and a landscape architect would ensure that new development has appropriate aesthetic appeal.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Access/Transparency

Currently, the only way to view project plans is through links in the PTC agenda. We can and should make it easier for residents to access staff reports and developer submissions so they can provide input at every stage.

- J. **Revise the existing planning page on the city website to include all steps in the process and provide links to relevant documents, e.g.,**

Figure 4: Detailed web page with links.

PROJECTS UNDER REVIEW:

Below is a list of projects currently in the planning pipeline with key review dates.

The public is encouraged to participate in the development process by

- Reviewing submitted plans and staff reports (links below)
- Attending Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) meetings
- Attending City Council meetings

Comments on any project—at any stage—should be sent to the [Community Development Director](#).

Comments made early in the process, before plans are completed, will benefit the community, the city staff and the developer. Public input is also welcome at any of the above meetings.

To be notified of meetings, go to <http://www.losaltosca.gov/subscribe>

Location	Description	PTC meeting	Council Meeting	Permits Applied	Permits Issued	Documents
999 Fremont	Commercial Design Review, Use Permit and Tentative Subdivision Map for a three-story, mixed-use project with commercial on the first story and five multi-family residential condominiums on the second and third stories.	6/4/15 Recommended for denial	7/28/15			links
995 Fremont		6/18/15 Study Session				links

- K. **Allow developers to make submissions online.**

RECOMMENDATIONS: Empowerment/Enforcement/Accountability

- L. **Clearly define, communicate and enforce our city standards.**

Our standards must be clearly defined, communicated and consistently enforced if we are to develop our city in a way that maintains the special qualities of our downtown—and attract the best developers.

RECOMMENDATION: Downtown Plan

M. Support the visioning process that will lead to a master plan for downtown. Codify the plan.

We strongly support the visioning process proposed by the city council. Many of our existing documents, codes and committee findings can feed into this process.

A comprehensive plan is needed to create a level playing field for developers and to ensure objective decision-making. It will prevent piecemeal approval, project by project, which has given us the negative aspects of First Street.

Council should take whatever steps required for maximum enforceability and timely execution to ensure the vision gets implemented.

CONCLUSION/OUTCOMES

Putting the above recommendations into practice will go a long way toward meeting the stated goals by supporting and empowering the planning department, providing exacting requirements to developers, and offering more transparency to residents.

This work will also further the visioning process leading to a Downtown Plan that specifically defines community needs and expectations and is written into the municipal code to ensure enforcement.

APPENDIX A

REVISIONS TO DESIGN GUIDELINES

RENAME Design Guidelines to Design Requirements, making it clear they have teeth and are not merely suggestions. (This does not mean they would be codified.)

REVISE for clarification and consistency.

- Combine Sections 4 (Mixed Commercial District, Zones CD/R3 and CD) and 5 (First Street District, Zones CD/R3 and CRS) into the Perimeter District. These two chapters are practically identical, but written in different words.

MOVE Required Findings to front of document.

REPLACE

- Three repetitive INTENT sidebars with just one and add “Retain a sense of place by preserving views of surrounding hills.”
- Page numbers with section numbers. Page numbers change.
- “Second” story to “upper” story for future flexibility.
- “Design Requirements are in addition to and support zoning requirements.”

ADD

- Purpose
- How to Use
- Checklist
- Zone designations for each district
- Links for future online interactive version
- “clear” to requirement for 60% transparent glazing (“Transparent” glass could be tinted. Currently section 3.2.3 g says: “Keep all window glazing transparent. Avoid tinted glass... ”)
- Italicized words to Findings: “Exterior materials, finishes and colors convey *high* quality, integrity, permanence and durability and *serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass.* *Materials are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and the downtown village,* and are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.

DELETE

- References to variances. Let’s not encourage them.
- References to setbacks and front module widths. Too confusing because they are zone-dependent, not district dependent. Applicant should refer to zoning code.

TBD

- Include additional photographs of examples of THIS is what we want, NOT THAT.
- Determine a consistent map representation that make zones clear.
- Since dimensions for courtyards and paseos are specified in the Design Guidelines, consider moving those dimensions to the zoning code.
- Revise to reflect approved changes from other subcommittee recommendations.

APPENDIX B

LOS GATOS ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANTS

<http://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13593>

RESOLUTION 2014 -040

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
GOVERNING THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS AND CLARIFYING
THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT
AND RESCINDING RESOLUTION 2002 -25**

WHEREAS, the Town of Los Gatos Town Council has determined that there is a need to modify the Town's design review process last adopted in 2002; and

WHEREAS, a goal of the Town is to ensure full public and policy maker consideration of design alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the use of an architectural consultant may assist applicants, Town staff, and decision -makers in achieving architectural excellence in designs submitted to the Town for review; and

WHEREAS, architectural consultants have been used in the past and may be engaged by the Town to review the architecture for fixture development proposals at the expense of project applicants;

WHEREAS, the architectural consultant is qualified to review and critique architecture and may be requested to work with applicants, Town staff and decision makers to provide input on designs which have been submitted to the Town, to answer questions about the submitted design and/ or design alternatives, and otherwise serve as a resource to decision makers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council that the following policies shall govern the architectural review process:

A. The architectural consultant may review plans upon request by Town staff, the Planning Commission and/ or the Town Council and provide input regarding the plan' s consistency with applicable design standards and guidelines, specific plans

and the General Plan. Staff reports on projects that have been reviewed by the architectural consultant will include any recommendations or alternatives presented by the architectural consultant, and any alternative, including the original reviewed design, submitted by the applicant.

B. Town staff, the Planning Commission and the Town Council may consider the architectural consultant's recommendations or alternatives as one of a number of factors used in the consideration of any development project submitted to the Town.

C. Town staff, the Planning Commission and the Town Council may use their independent discretion in evaluating the recommendations of the architectural consultant and may approve any design that meets all applicable Town Design Guidelines, ordinances, specific plans and the General Plan.

D. Whenever possible, the Planning Commission and/ or the Town Council should seek to resolve design issues that arise during the hearing by crafting motions to deny, continue with direction to revise, or to approve with appropriate conditions. When necessary, the Planning Commission and/ or the Town Council may continue an item to a future meeting and request the presence of the architectural consultant to address specific issues or questions. Any costs associated with the delay and requested presence of the architectural consultant will be paid by the applicant

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Town Council held on the 16th day of June, 2014, by the following vote:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES: Marcia Jensen, Diane McNutt, Joe Pirzynski, Barbara Spector, Mayor Steven Leonardis

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

MAYOR OF THE TO OF OS GATOS

LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

ATTEST:

CLERK ADMINISTRATOR THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS

LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

APPENDIX C

MAPPING TOOLS

Example from Los Gatos:

http://www2.lynxgis.com/Html5Viewer/Index.html?configBase=http://www2.lynxgis.com/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/Los_Gatos/viewers/LosGatosPublic/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default



Email from the Los Gatos planning manager:

“The Town has had a GIS mapping system for over 15 years and Lynx is the company that maintains and updates technical aspects of the system for us. Other jurisdictions have much more robust GIS capabilities and resources to manage their systems. The Town’s GIS is a work in progress and we continue to try to link various information from existing Town resources to make it more useful for both our staff and citizens. GIS really has nearly unlimited benefits across all departments for storing and displaying a wide range of information and can be queried to pull out specific information for research purposes.

“The main benefits are the various information that you can get in one location which is very useful for staff in various departments, citizens, realtors, developers, and our decision makers. Our staff uses the system for their day to day work answering questions via e-mail, telephone, and at the counter. Additionally, it is used for our public noticing and creating a wide variety of graphics for various projects.”

APPENDIX D

PEDESTRIAN GUIDELINES

Example: City of Powell, Ohio (population 12,237) Pedestrian Scale Design Guidelines

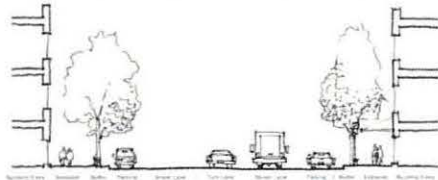
Adopted by Ordinance 2009-27; November 4, 2009

A simple 10-page document focused on the essentials of creating a pedestrian friendly environment, with lots of illustrative diagrams and photos.

http://www.cityofpowell.us/documents/Development_Docs/City%20of%20Powell%20Pedestrian%20Scale%20Design%20Guidelines.pdf

Pedestrian Friendly

An area or neighborhood designed to encourage and support pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian is given priority in this design. Features: 1. generous sidewalk, 2. clear approach way to building or site, 3. safe and comfortable street.



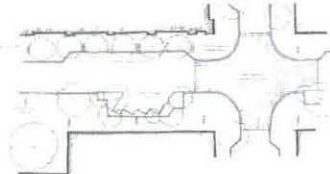
Generous, friendly zones. Pedestrian friendly zones are defined primarily by three things:

1. The destination in the pedestrian friendly area must be within walking distance from residences or vehicular collection points (essentially, the pedestrian must be able to arrive in the area and be on foot).
2. The completion of routes and destinations throughout the area must be safe and attractive (friendly) to pedestrians. The pedestrian must be comfortable walking from one place to the next and then ultimately back to where they entered the area.
3. The area should be attractive to pedestrians. Once they have arrived and are presented with the functional requirements of safe and manageably walkable routes, the finishing touches are needed to encourage the pedestrian to actually walk.



Circulation

The path of movement perceived as the conceptual thread that links the spaces of a building, or any series of interior or exterior spaces together. A vehicle requires a path with a minimum radius that reflects its turning radius; however, the width of the path can be tailored lightly to its dimensions. Pedestrians can tolerate small changes in direction, but require a greater volume of space relative to their body.



sidewalks and streets. As the primary means of pedestrian circulation, sidewalks are an important part of pedestrian friendly design. Sidewalks should be continuous from block to block and neighborhood to neighborhood. They should provide a clear and direct route and be wide enough to comfortably accommodate expected traffic levels and the street furniture that anchors pedestrian-oriented areas.

Intersections and crossings. Pedestrian friendly intersections should have a turning radius of 5 to 10 feet. A tighter radius makes turning vehicles more visible to pedestrians than large sweeping turns where cars safely need to slow down. Narrow turns also reduce the distance of street that the pedestrian must cross.

Markings and signage. All crossings should be well-marked and well lit. Crosswalk markings and signs should include crosswalk signs, advance warning signs, and other signage that helps and



Site Planning

The organizational stage of the design process that involves an analysis of composition and placement of a building within its surrounding environment.



Site Planning should be the first step in the design process. It should be done before any other design work is done. It should be done in a way that is consistent with the overall goals of the project.



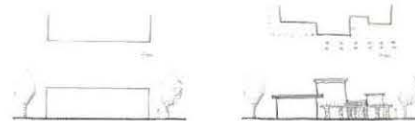
Site Planning and Context. A building should participate with the language of its environment. More importantly, successful pedestrian friendly buildings should maintain strong contextual elements in order to contribute to the "sense of place" of a particular city, region, or area. By combining the quality and the character of its surroundings, the building facilitates the continuity of the vernacular style.



Site Planning and Connectivity. Good vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation creates connectivity to and from the building while accommodating successful links of the entire urban fabric. Sidewalk, walkways, intersections, crosswalks, signage, landscaping, and lighting should be considered from a master site planning scale in order to fully understand the building's impact on the surrounding area. Disconnected sidewalks and bike paths are just as pedestrian unfriendly as not having any of these amenities.

Massing

The three-dimensional volume of a building, with an understanding of its overall impression of weight, density, and bulk.



Massing should be the first step in the design process. It should be done before any other design work is done. It should be done in a way that is consistent with the overall goals of the project.



Massing and Scale. The human scale. Pedestrian oriented massing should reflect the human scale within its overall composition. The interplay of solid and void can be used to help break down the general volume of the building and relate it back to human proportion and scale. Additionally, window size and placement can help facilitate the visual difference from the overall building massing and the pedestrian.



Scale and Detail. The scale and detail of a building's facade are important to break down the massing, especially on the ground level where a pedestrian interacts with the building. Composition pertaining to columns, windows, steps, awnings, balconies, covered walkways, and other details is as important as the overall building mass. These details provide a vertical relief and help break down the building's massing to keep the pedestrian engaged with the building's surroundings.

Proportion

The proper or harmonious relation of one part to another or to the whole with respect to spatial quality. Proportional theories have been prevalent throughout architectural history, and remain a guiding force in design. Renaissance architect Alberti called beauty, "the harmony of all parts in relation to one another" and thus analogous to proportion.



A grid of squares illustrates the concept of proportion. A grid of squares illustrates the concept of proportion.



A diagram showing a person walking on a sidewalk, with lines indicating the proportion of the sidewalk width to the building facade.



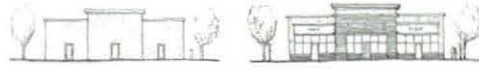
A photograph of a city street with a sidewalk, showing the relationship between the building facade and the pedestrian path.

Proportion and Block Length New developments should utilize short to medium-length blocks. A higher proportion of intersections along a roadway creates more opportunities for pedestrians to cross streets, slow traffic, and provides more relief to the pedestrian than long uninterrupted blocks. Blocks 300 to 500 feet are good for pedestrians. Blocks over 600 feet should not be considered pedestrian-oriented.

Proportion and Street Orientation Buildings. The ratio of building height to street width is important for creating visual enclosure for pedestrians. Visual enclosure occurs when building buildings on a street occupy most of a pedestrian's cone of vision. Successful visual enclosure creates an "outdoor room" that the pedestrian occupies.

Materiality

The concept of, or applied use of, various materials or substances in the medium of building.



Two architectural drawings showing different material treatments for building facades.



Materiality and the Pedestrian Materiality gives a pedestrian tactile experience of the building's facade and streetscape. Weight and scale are perceived differently due to light and sound absorption, therefore, texture and color affect the overall perception of the building's facade. Materiality also acts as a cue to how a building is perceived, from what through a visual understanding of form and space and from closer inspection through texture and grain.

Materiality and Formal Elements Materials are integral features, relying on all of their senses to experience the world. Material differentiation can also be introduced through signage, landscaping, and other elements.

Rhythm

Movement characterized by a patterned repetition or alternation of formal elements or motifs in the same or a modified form. (F. Chung)



A B C B C B A



A B C B C B A

Diagram illustrating rhythm and sequence, showing a pattern of vertical elements (A, B, C, B, C, B, A) and a sequence of horizontal elements (A, B, C, B, C, B, A).

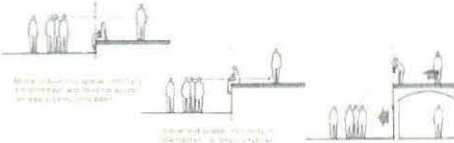


Rhythm and Sequence Most buildings incorporate elements that are repetitive by nature. Beams and columns create modules of space that are perceived as rhythmic. Likewise, repetitive elements on the exterior of a building, such as windows and door openings, create rhythmic components that are easily read by a pedestrian. Rhythmic pattern adds to continuity and a vital for pedestrian life.

Vertical and Horizontal Rhythm Most pedestrian-friendly buildings incorporate vertical elements in rhythm along the ground floor of the facade. Horizontal rhythmic form to represent a long expanse, leaving the pedestrian feeling overwhelmed with large distances to travel. A taller perspective for eye-level, a short and staccato vertical elements such as columns or window openings, that invite the pedestrian to look up and keep them engaged with the building's rhythm.

Transparency

The degree of enclosure and openness from one space to the next, implying a visual connectivity and an interchange of flow of space.



Three diagrams showing different levels of transparency and visual connectivity between spaces.



Transparency and the Ground Floor The ground floor facade should be the single most achieved interface between city and building. Open and welcoming buildings bring with them a sense of security and accessibility that are important qualities for successful pedestrian life. It weaves in and out of a building visually connects the building with the pedestrian and the surrounding environment.

Transparency and Exterior Enclosures Transparency into a building can be generated in a number of ways. Large doors and windows maintain visual connectivity while openings within the building's overall mass, such as entry courts, create pockets of exterior space that open the building up even further. This visual and physical continuity extends the building's program to its environment and generates a sense of an exterior enclosure or "outdoor room."

Transparency and Pedestrian-Friendly Buildings

Detail

A small integrated element of a work of art, craft, or design. Details are much more than subordinate elements; they can be regarded as the normal units of significance in the architecture profession of building. (Mario Pavesi)



Visual and Tactile Detail Buildings in pedestrian-oriented areas are experienced more holistically than buildings in higher speed car-oriented areas. At these ranges and speeds, the pedestrian has time to notice and feature the materials and subtle variations in design. This experience is not shared into the building through the transparency of the entry and display windows along the elevation. Pedestrian-friendly buildings should provide these kinds of details for eye contact.

Materiality and Detail As an important part of walkable neighborhoods, the design of street furniture should also meet the pedestrian experience. Decorative and public furniture like street benches, bike racks, and even parking meters add interest and appropriateness to pedestrian zones. Many of these items are necessary to age maintenance or safety reasons so requires only a little extra effort to detail them so that they become of great as well as a nice addition.

APPENDIX E FORM BASED ZONING

http://m.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/Community%20Development/page/429/downtown_land_use_plans_for_website_revised.pdf

Downtown Land Use and Economic Revitalization Plans 12-18-13

Page 8: "The other major effort undertaken ... was the establishment of form-based zoning for all commercial districts in the Downtown triangle, and specifically the CD/R3 zoning for First Street."

Per Zach Dahl: "The use of design review findings, removal of lot coverage and floor area limits, and the simplification of use definitions in each zone district were intended to move Los Altos toward a more form based approach to zoning that was less prescriptive. But I wouldn't say that Los Altos is using purely form based zoning because we still have parking requirements, setbacks and other site standards."

Whether or not we apply pure form-based zoning (<http://formbasedcodes.org/definition>) or a hybrid methodology, **we should** incorporate explicit illustrations in codes and guidelines.

Example from Benicia, page 4-6:

<http://formbasedcodes.org/content/uploads/2014/02/benicia-downtown-mixed-use-master-plan.pdf>

Chapter 4: Form-Based Code

Town Core (TC) Standards

Key

- Property Line
- Setback Line
- Build-to Line (BTL)
- Building Area

Building Placement		Use	
Build-to Line (Distance from Property Line)		Ground Floor	
Front	0' A	Service, Retail, or Recreation, Education & Public Assembly* I	
Side Street	0' B	Upper Floor(s)	
Setback (Distance from Property Line)		Residential or Service* J	
Side	0' C	*See Table 4.1 for specific uses. Ground floors that face the street front shall be nonresidential and shall not include parking, garages, or similar uses.	
Rear	0' D		
Adjacent to NC Zone	0' E		
Adjacent to any other zone	0' F		
Building Form		Height	
Primary Street Façade built to BTL	30% min.* G	Building Min.	2' K
Side Street Façade built to BTL	30% min.* H	Building Max.	2.5 stories and 40' L
Lot Width	125' max. C	Max. to Eave/Top of Parapet	35' M
Lot Depth	100' max. I	Ancillary Building Max.	2 stories and 25' N
*Street façades must be built to BTL along first 30' from every corner.		Finish Ground Floor Level	6" max. above sidewalk O
Notes		First Floor Ceiling Height	12' min. clear P
All floors must have a primary ground floor entrance that faces the primary or side street.		Upper Floor(s) Ceiling Height	8' min. clear Q
Loading docks, overhead doors, and other service entries are prohibited on street-facing façades.		Notes	
Any building 60' or 50' wide must be broken down to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each.		Mansard roof forms are not allowed.	
4-0		Any section along the BTL not defined by a building must be defined by a 2'6" to 4'6" high fence or a fence or masonry wall.	

Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan
Opticos Design, Inc.

APPENDIX F

CHECKLISTS: DETAILED & SPECIFIC

Explicit 4-page checklist to “ensure completeness of the proposal.”

<http://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/361>

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW APPLICATION PACKAGE

TOWN OF LOS GATOS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Page 12: CHECKLIST FOR PREPARATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Prior to preparing plans, please review all City Code Zoning requirements and applicable specific plan(s) and development guidelines. The following is a listing of the minimum requirements for the submittal of plans to the Community Development Department. Applicants ARE to use this as a checklist to ensure completeness of the proposal.

TOWN OF LOS GATOS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS	
<p>Prior to preparing plans, please review all Town Code Zoning requirements and applicable specific plan(s) and development guidelines. The following is a listing of the minimum requirements for the submittal of plans to the Community Development Department. Applicants <u>ARE</u> to use this as a checklist to ensure completeness of the proposal.</p> <p>A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scale shown on each sheet 2. North arrow on each sheet as applicable 3. Sheet not to exceed 24" X 36" size 4. Fully dimensioned 5. For smaller projects, such as single family residences, information may be combined on one or two sheets <p>B. PLAT OR SITE PLAN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All property lines and plottable easements 2. All required yards or building setbacks. 3. All buildings, existing and proposed including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. dimensioned floor plans, b. indication of the use of all areas; c. which buildings (or portions thereof) are to be removed; d. existing and proposed grades. 4. Existing trees, including size, location, species, existing grade at the base, and drip-lines. 5. Driveways and off-street parking spaces, interior clear dimensions of garage including stall size, aisle widths, back up distance, curbs, and surfacing materials. 6. Loading spaces where applicable. 7. Location and size of handicapped spaces where applicable. 8. Public improvements, both existing and proposed, including streets, curbs, gutters, street lighting, street paving and fire hydrants. 9. Preliminary drainage plan, including disposition of all drainage, including roof leaders. 10. Preliminary grading plan, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. location of all cuts and fills, b. table with volume of cuts and fills for various elements (house, driveway etc.) c. calculations of volumes, d. clearly delineated existing and proposed contours. e. interim erosion control measures. 1. retaining wall detail, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) top and base of wall elevations, (2) type of material, (3) drainage for walls. 	<p style="margin-left: 20px;">g. Building, garage and deck elevations</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">h. Trees impacted by grading</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">i. Table of existing and proposed impervious areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Location and elevations of screened trash container area for commercial buildings. 12. Location of buildings on adjacent parcels 13. Existing and proposed utilities (water service, sewage disposal system, gas, electric, telephone, cable, TV service lines and transformers) 14. Shadow study diagram for two story elevations, clearly illustrating effect on structures on adjacent properties. 15. Sight line studies (hillside only). 16. Table giving the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. site area (gross and net), b. gross floor area (each floor and total), c. floor area ratio, d. lot area coverage (building footprint) 17. Average slope. <p>C. BUILDING ELEVATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elevations of all sides of all existing buildings to be removed, existing to remain and proposed. 2. Exterior materials (type, texture and color) 3. Building height, including height plane for properties on sloping lots. 4. Location and method of screening of roof-mounted mechanical equipment 5. Samples of colors, preferably mounted on 8 1/2" X 11" soft (not cardboard, etc.) backing (commercial and hillside only) 6. Schematic elevations illustrating building height and mass in relationship to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. structures on the adjacent two parcels on either side of property; b. structures across the street and in back of property. 7. Existing and proposed grade lines 8. Street Profiles (both sides) 9. Cross section showing property behind and across street <p>D. LANDSCAPING/TREE PLAN*</p> <p><small>(*Tree plan only for single and two family residences unless located in the hillside)</small></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where feasible, landscape plans shall be designed to reduce impacts of pesticide use as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. provide irrigation which reduces runoff and promotes surface infiltration. b. landscaping shall be designed and operated to treat storm water runoff by incorporating elements that collect, detain and infiltrate runoff. 2. If rendering is provided, trees shown on plan(s) must reflect their size at time of planting and the application will be conditioned as such. Additional renderings may be provided with year of the tree growth stated on the plan. 3. Location and drip-line on the site and landscaping plan of all existing and proposed trees over 4" in diameter. 4. Table indicating the following for all existing trees anywhere near areas of construction (sample at end of packet): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. location symbol; b. common and botanical names; c. trunk circumference; d. physical condition; e. to be saved, removed or pruned; f. reason for removal. 5. Table indicating the following for all new trees and shrubs to be planted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. location symbol; b. common and botanical names; c. initial planting size; d. size at maturity (height/width of drip-line); e. number to be planted; f. fencing, including height, location with construction detail showing materials. <p>E. EXTERIOR LIGHTING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Location 2. Style of fixtures 3. Intensity (wattage and type of light source) 4. Height of pole-mounted fixtures <p>F. TENTATIVE MAP</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tract name or designation and property address. 2. Name and address of owner, subdivider and registered civil engineer or licensed surveyor. 3. Locations, names and widths of all adjoining highways, streets or ways; the names of adjacent subdivisions and the names of all owners of properties adjacent to proposed tract. 4. Width and grades of all highways, streets, and ways, within north-south direction.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Widths and locations of all existing or proposed easements, whether public or private. 6. Radius of all street curves 7. Total size of property before and after street and right-of-way dedication (gross and net land area calculation) 8. Lot layout, including the dimension of each lot line, and exact square footage of each lot. 9. Location of all water courses and natural drainage channels, locations of all areas covered by water or subject to inundation and existing and proposed storm drain facilities. 10. Source of water supply, including conceptual design. 11. Method of sewage disposal, including conceptual design. 12. Location of all buildings in close proximity to proposed tract. 13. Proposed public areas (if any) 14. Contour lines (existing and proposed) showing one foot contours for ground slopes of less than five feet vertical and one hundred feet horizontal distance, and five foot horizontal distance, and five foot contours for ground slopes in excess thereof. 15. Location of vicinity map, date, north point and scale. 16. Number of letter identification for each lot 17. Location and outline of each existing building and a note as to whether or not it is to be removed. 18. Each street shown by its actual street name or by a temporary name or symbol for the purpose of identification. 19. All trees shall be accurately identified and plotted with base grade data, drip-line and finished grades within the drip-line. 20. All fire hydrant locations. 21. Required yards. 22. If condominium or townhouse project, two (2) copies of CC&R's and other related documents such as association by-laws. 23. Name of utility providers and show location of closest existing services, including gas, electricity, telephone, cable television. 24. If hillside, show grading required for roadway construction, including location of all cuts and fills, volumes, retaining walls or reinforced earth slopes (with top and base elevations), existing and proposed contours. 25. If hillside, show conceptual driveways, building sites, drainage and sanitary sewers. 26. Inform adjacent owners.

- properties in HR zone
25. If it is impossible or impracticable to place upon the tentative map any of the information required above, such information shall be furnished on a separate document which shall be submitted with the map, the subdivision and his engineer shall familiarize themselves with the current subdivision design standards of the Town
- G. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT - OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**
1. A land use plan locating all proposed uses.
 2. A tentative site plan illustrating the following:
 - a. building placement
 - b. open space (public and private), indicating how it is to be used.
 - c. natural features such as creeks, major trees, bluffs, etc.
 - d. sidewalks, paths and trails.
 - e. vehicular circulation.
 - f. major features on adjacent property which affect the development proposal or are potentially affected by it.
 3. Schematic architectural elevations of all buildings and structures illustrated in relationship to each other and any major structures on adjacent property which are affected by the development proposal or are potentially affected by it.
 4. Schedule for any phasing of development.
 5. Future lot lines, condominium units and easement areas, all subject to subdivision approval.
 6. Tabulation of land area, including the areas of
 - a. entire planned development.
 - b. public streets.
 - c. private streets.
 - d. sidewalks, paths and trails.
 - e. parking areas.
 - f. vehicular circulation.
 - g. major features on adjacent property which affect the development proposal or are potentially affected by it.
 7. Floor area of each type of building (for example - shops, offices, warehouses, or dwellings).
 8. Floor Area Ratio
 9. Proposed number of off-street parking spaces.
 10. Grading, soils, and geologic information.
 11. Proposed signing.
 12. Copies of any instrument or document such as covenants, conditions, and restrictions which are intended to be used to affect the development of the land.

- require
- H. OTHER INFORMATION**
1. Provide information required by applicable Town development standards and guidelines.
 2. NPDES requirements: All projects creating, adding, or replacing 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface on the project site, must provide the following information on the development plans. An impervious surface prevents the infiltration or passage of water into the soil. Impervious surfaces include building rooftops, paved patios, covered patios, driveways, parking lots, paved walkways, sidewalks and streets.

Please Note: Subdivisions of any size are not exempt from this requirement.

 - a. site size
 - b. existing impervious surface area (includes land covered by buildings, sheds, patios/covers, parking lots, streets, sidewalks, paved walkways and driveways).
 - c. impervious surface area created, added, or replaced.
 - d. total impervious surface area (new + existing).
 - e. percent increase/replacement of impervious surface area
 - f. estimated area of land disturbance during construction (includes clearing, grading, or excavating).
 - g. type of stormwater controls used (none, site design measure, source control measure, and/or stormwater treatment measure)

For more information regarding selection of Best Management Practices for stormwater pollution prevention of stormwater treatment contact the Engineering Division at (408) 399-5771
 3. Floor and lot areas, number of stories and FAR of other sites in immediate neighborhood for residential projects.
 4. ADA compliance for commercial development.
 5. Hazardous Materials - For any development project, the applicant shall submit:
 - a. A signed statement indicating whether the project is located on a site which is identified by the Town as a solid waste disposal facility, or that there will be no usage and storage of hazardous materials or documentation of the following:
 - (1) storage locations.
 - (2) inventory list of chemical trade

- (4) containment plans
6. Letter of Justification - where a letter of justification is either required or recommended, it should include the following information as applicable:
 - a. description of the proposed request, i.e., type of operation or use, hours of operation, number of employees, products, shift detail, etc.
 - b. benefit to the community if the project should be approved;
 - c. where a traffic impact is determined by the Parks and Public Works Department, quote specific sections of the General Plan and any applicable Specific Plan clearly stating that the type of project will benefit the community.
 - d. list the facts that would in your opinion, justify the application.
 - e. for residential projects, how the proposal meets the Town's housing needs as identified in the General Plan
 - f. for variance applications the letter should speak to the following required findings:

"Because of the following special circumstances that apply to the property (such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings) the strict application of the zoning regulations causes an undue hardship or poses practical difficulties relating to use of the land, deprives the property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under identical zone classifications and would make the property otherwise unusable."
 - g. for conditional use permit applications, the letter should speak to the following required findings:

"The proposed uses of the property are essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare; the proposed uses will not impair the integrity and character of the zoning district; the proposed uses would not be detrimental to public health, safety, or general welfare; the proposed uses of the property are in harmony with the

- various elements or objectives of the General Plan and the purposes of this Ordinance."
7. If existing residential buildings are to be demolished, a structural report, prepared by a licensed architect or structural engineer unrelated to the project, is required. The document shall describe in detail the physical condition of the building and its components (foundation, walls, roof, plumbing, electrical, etc.), approximate cost to rehabilitate to current code requirements, and a recommendation as to under what conditions the building should be rehabilitated or demolished. For historically designated structures proposed to be demolished, which are listed as contributors, in addition to the structural report, a detailed report shall be submitted describing all aspects of the structures physical condition and shall incorporate pertinent information from the Town's Historic Resources Inventory describing the structure's historical and architectural characteristics. This report shall be prepared by a qualified person knowledgeable in historic preservation under contract with the Town at the applicant's expense.
 8. The use of both passive and active solar energy measures is a high priority with the Town. Each proposal must be designed to maximize such measures to include the preplumbing and installation of solar collectors, window locations and building siding to maximize natural conditions, and proper use of roof overhangs. A written statement must accompany the application that clearly describes these measures.
 9. For historically designated structures or structures in historic districts, or structures built prior to 1941, provide a statement of why the proposed change (i.e., addition, remodel, demolition, etc.) is requested and how the proposal conforms with designating ordinance as well as Section 23.80.215 through 29.80.320 of the Town Code. The Town's Historic Preservation Committee will review all applications which affect historic structures or site

APPENDIX G

This recent downtown remodel clearly indicates that the Design Guidelines are ignored and “village character” is falling by the wayside. Another reason to call them “Design Requirements.”

<http://www.losaltosonline.com/news/sections/business/183-business-features/51365->

BUSINESS & REAL ESTATE

Local couple keeps smiles on Main St.

Published on Wednesday, 14 October 2015 01:09 Written by Alicia Castro - Staff [Writer/aliciac@latc.com](mailto:aliciac@latc.com)



Alicia Castro/Town Crier

Jasmine H. Le, D.D.S., and Mark Huy Vo, D.D.S., bring their Los Altos Advanced Dental Arts practice closer to home with a new office on Main Street.

For the new co-owners of a Main Street office building, a boring building redo wouldn't suffice.

“We wanted something modern,” said Mark Huy Vo, D.D.S., who owns Los Altos Advanced Dental Arts at 166 Main St. with his wife, Jasmine H. Le, D.D.S. “We tracked down our favorite architect and he said, ‘We can transform this.’”

Comprehensive practice

The avant-garde edifice – inspired by the glass-fronted Apple Store in Palo Alto – is emblematic of the industry within, a dentist office that employs new technology to keep its patients smiling.

CRS zoning code: “Opaque, reflective, or dark tinted glass should not be used on the ground floor elevation. Sixty (60) percent of the ground floor elevation should be transparent window surface.”

Current Design Guidelines:

3.2 Architecture: The City will work with applicants to adapt critical functional features of prototype plans to their Los Altos sites, but will not accept standard plans, building forms, elevations, materials, or colors that do not relate to the site, adjacent development, or Los Altos' community character.

3.2.3 c) The use of wood doors with glazing and raised panel details, rather than metal and glass doors, is strongly encouraged to add warmth to the shop entries.

3.2.3 g) Keep all window glazing transparent. Avoid tinted glass in favor of awnings and other shading devices for sun control.

ATTACHMENT C

Abstract of Recommendations

ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented to the **PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

by the **DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE**

January 7, 2016

Please refer to reports for full text of recommendations

**Legend: Order of importance 0 – 3 with
"0" being the highest importance**

HEIGHT, VIEWS/SHADOW, AND THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Item	Recommendation	Importance
1. Amend zoning height and design control for CD and CD/R3 and require wider, clear sidewalks		
A	Amend 14.44.120 – Height of structures (CD) to read “No structure shall exceed 30 feet in height...” Amend 14.52.100 Height of structures (CD/R3) to limit height to 35 feet “For entirely residential projects” and to 30 feet “For mixed-use and commercial projects” as defined in 14.52.060 - Required building setbacks (CD/R3).	0
B	Require minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet that is clear of all obstructions such as signage and utility poles (consistent with streetscape plan previously implemented for north end of First Street).	1
C	Amend 14.44.130 – Design Control (CD) and 14.52.110 – Design Control (CD/R3) to read (at B.2) “Every building over 50 feet wide...” and amend B.2.i. to read “A change of plane, effecting changes in both the horizontal and vertical aspects.”	1
D	Require setback of building exterior at about the elevation of any third-floor plate to reduce mass and enhance village character.	2
E	Through development requirements or guidelines, encourage variation in building-entrance configuration, to avoid a “tunnel” that would result from having all buildings constructed to the minimum setback.	2
F	Where property adjoins public right-of-way, require setback up to 5 feet if needed to create safe pedestrian/resident/customer walkways, with suitable landscaping.	2
2. Amend code sections 14.66.240 - Height Limitations- Exceptions and 14.02.070 - Definitions		
G	Sec. 14.66.240(A) to apply only to flagpoles, radio and television antennas, and transmission towers.	1
H	Move towers, spires, cupolas, and chimney to 14.66.240(E) to cover all architectural features and elements that have aesthetic, screening, or green energy (e.g. solar panel) purposes.	1
I	Limit height for such elements and features to 8 feet above maximum height for the building (e.g. 30 + 8 or 35 + 8, as applicable), measured from lot grade.	1

J	Discourage use of such features if they have the general effect of increasing perceived height and mass.	2
K	Remove language in guidelines and plans that encourage towers (Downtown Design Plan p. 11, 22, 35). Add tower definition and penthouse definitions to code and clarify not to be habitable or commercial space.	2
3. Amend and supplement the language and photographic examples in the Downtown Design Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines or their successor documents		
L	Provide better of examples of desirable looks and articulations; delete inapplicable photo of tower.	2
4. Amend "Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review" and corresponding Staff Report		
M	Item 5, "Building Elevations," require all exceptions to height limits, whether maximum height or exceptions under 14.66.240 be called out on elevations and that and exceptions under 14.66.240 be shown on one or more elevations.	1
N	Amend current Staff Report cover sheet to indicate whether proposal meets height limits and what exceptions are called for per 14.66.240.	1
5. Acquire and apply expertise in light/shadow modeling for proposed developments		
O	Consult a specialist who understands daylight/shadow impacts in a commercial setting. Identify the tools and develop a process for evaluating the impact of proposed developments on the streetscape, sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscape plans. Create a process for including such evaluation in the decision-making process.	0
6. Protect views		
P	Amend zoning and/or building guidelines to preserve current remaining views of surrounding hills and open spaces.	1
Q	Provide examples of which specific views to be given special emphasis for protection.	1
R	Identify the views to be protected, in consultation with experts, starting with the view corridors southbound on San Antonio Avenue, Edith Avenue, and Main and State Streets.	2
7. Improve landscape requirements throughout the downtown and perimeter districts		
S	Include landscaping plans for commercial and residential projects in the downtown area in the Project Submittal Checklist; plan to be reviewed and approved.	1
T	Trees along streets in the downtown area should have a height of 8 feet when planted and a canopy which is at least 15-25 feet in diameter 8-10 years after being planted. All trees should be properly watered and maintained to ensure proper growth and health of tree.	1
U	Require trees to be planted along streets every 15-20 feet.	1
V	Implement companion plantings that will help fill in and hide the tree well.	2

W	Define “abundant,” “substantial,” generous, “extensive,” “inviting” and similar terms from Downtown Guidelines to describe required landscaping and enforce them.	2
X	Increase landscaping in the front of buildings, which may require increasing front setback from 2 to 5 feet or through the development process.	2
Y	Create a list of suggested plants for the builder to consider when finalizing the landscaping design. The suggested plants will help provide continuity to the downtown experience.	3
Z	Enforce the maintenance of landscaping.	2
AA	Incorporate requirements for amenities and landscaping in the anticipated streetscape plan for First Street between Man and San Antonio.	2
8. Ensure that the color and texture of exterior finishes reflect an appropriate relationship		
BB	Modify the required findings by adding the following: "Exterior materials, finishes and colors used serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and in the downtown village". The current required finding "D" should be amended to insert the word " high " immediately before "quality": Exterior materials and finishes convey <u>high</u> quality, integrity...	1
CC	Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review” and/or the Design Guidelines to require that proposed buildings in the Downtown district be modeled using 3D and other forms of digital simulation that depict the Materials Board and allow for closer consideration of proposed colors and textures of exterior finishes in context. Submission of a physical Materials Board of samples of colors, materials and finishes should be made a formal requirement and should be included in the submission requirement checklist. Submission of larger scale samples and/or examples of uses of the materials and finishes in prior projects should be required for materials and finishes not in common use in the Downtown district.	2

DOCUMENTS, POLICY, AND PROCEDURES

Item	Recommendation	Importance
1. Documentation		
A.1	Rename "Design Guidelines" to "Design Requirements" to indicate they have teeth (enforceable). Edit for clarification, consistency and future interactive online use.	1
A.2	Add a checklist to make it easy for developers (and planners) to ensure project is conforming.	0
A.3	Simplify: Combine Chapter 4 (Mixed Commercial District) and Chapter 5 (First Street District) into a new Chapter 4 (Perimeter District).	1
B	Ensure consistent terminology throughout all documents.	1
C	Keep all documents current and discard those that are obsolete.	1
D	Make the zoning code the single source for explicit, measurable requirements. Consider one source document for each subject.	2
E	Make more use of illustrations and diagrams in all documents.	2
F	Make all documents interactive online with links to relevant city codes.	3
2. Process/Procedures		
G	Include more detailed checklists at all phases of planning process. Follow the example of the Los Gatos project application checklist.	1
H	Require 3D modeling submission (, e.g. Sketch Up software or similar) for every project.	1
I	Select an ad-hoc panel of consulting architects and landscape architects (paid by developer) to review all commercial and multi-family projects early in the design phase. Comprising 2 architects and 1 landscape architect, the panel would review each project – focused solely on design – in an advisory capacity.	1
3. Access/Transparency		
J	Revise the existing planning page on the city website to include all steps in the process (including study sessions) and provide links to relevant documents.	1
K	Allow developers to make submissions online.	3
4. Empowerment/Enforcement/Accountability		
L	Clearly define, communicate and enforce our city standards.	3
5. Downtown Plan		
M	Support the visioning process that will lead to a master plan for downtown. Codify the plan.	1

ATTACHMENT D

**Planning and Transportation Commission Study Session Minutes
November 5, 2015 (Draft)**

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS WITH THE
DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE, HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5,
2015, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE NEUTRA HOUSE, 181 HILLVIEW AVENUE,
LOS ALTOS**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Commission Chair McTIGHE, Vice-Chair LORELL, Commissioners BAER and BRESSACK

Facilitator Councilmember SATTERLEE, Committee Members MESSINGER, HOPE, MARRIOTT, REED, ENANDER, SEE, MORRIS AND SALMON

ABSENT: Commissioners MOISON (due to a real property conflict) and BODNER. Committee Members INFANTE AND BARTON

STAFF: Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD

STUDY SESSION

Report from the Downtown Buildings Committee

Councilmember SATTERLEE provided introductory comments regarding the Downtown Buildings Committee.

Commissioner BAER recused himself due to a real property interest within 500 feet of the CD district.

The Committee presented its recommendations regarding height restrictions to the CD and CD/R3 districts.

Commissioner comments included:

- Noting that commercial property might convert to multiple-family uses, which should be anticipated;
- Suggestion to add reference maps showing the different zoning districts.

The Committee presented its recommendations regarding an increase in setbacks to the CD/R3 district.

Commissioner comments included:

- Increasing setbacks on the numbered streets might be difficult due their narrow right-of-way;
- Increasing setbacks would necessitate private property dedications or reducing the on-street parking area; and
- Creating significant nonconformities with code changes is improper planning in that it creates negative financial effects for existing development.

DRAFT

The Committee presented its recommendations on requiring additional third-story setbacks in the CD and CD/R3 districts.

Commissioner comments included:

- The setback guideline for third stories should be better defined;
- Requiring a specific setback of upper floors by zoning may not be the best tool for addressing concerns such as scale; and
- Requiring greater setbacks of upper floors on narrow streets might be appropriate.

Commissioner BAER rejoined the meeting.

The Committee presented its recommendations on curb appeal.

Commissioner comments included:

- Requiring Planning and Transportation Commission review of downtown building color changes might be appropriate.

The Committee presented its recommendations on light planes, landscape and views.

Commissioner comments included:

- Decisions on light planes, or casting shadows, needs to be objective;
- A concern that limiting the light planes or shadows may inappropriately restrict development on the south side of the streets in the downtown context;
- Regulating views is subjective and landscape restricts views, too.

The Committee presented its recommendations on the Downtown Design Guidelines and processes and procedures.

Commissioner comments included:

- The application of design guidelines needs consistency and predictability;
- Having an architectural consultant might benefit the City;
- Having an architect on the Planning and Transportation Commission is key; and
- A desire to have staff provide input on the recommendations as a key part of the Commission and Council review process.

The Committee presented its recommendations on the accessibility and transparency of the development process.

Commissioner comments included:

- A development's success depends somewhat on an applicant's desire to be careful, respectful and flexible; and
- A guidelines checklist might be helpful to summarize the expectations and outline the limitations.

Public comment included resident Pat Buhler applauding the Committee and Commission work on the subjects.

DRAFT

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McTIGHE adjourned the meeting at 9:00 P.M.

David Kornfield
Planning Services Manager

ATTACHMENT E

**Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi-Family
Design Review Handout**



SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS COMMERCIAL OR MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN REVIEW

APPLICATION FORM, FEE & REQUIRED MATERIALS

All items are required at time of submittal. The project will not be scheduled for a public meeting until the application has been reviewed by a planner and is deemed complete.

1. **General Application Form**

2. **Filing Fee(s)**

Application	\$ _____
Environmental Review	\$ _____
Other: _____	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Make checks payable to the City of Los Altos. Fees are not refundable.

3. **Public Notification**

Two (2) sets of blank postage paid postcards (Post Office approved size).

Planning staff will determine the required number of postcards in each set.

4. **Materials Board**

a. Initial submittal: Provide color photos on an 8.5" x 11" sheet showing roofing material, siding, applied materials (e.g. stone, brick), trim, etc., and identify manufacturer and product specifications.

b. Once application deemed complete: Provide product samples of proposed materials and colors on an 11" x 17" board and, if necessary, applied material mockups to illustrate the appearance of materials together.

5. **Technical Studies**

Depending on the nature of the project, technical studies, such as a traffic impact assessment, arborist report or acoustical analysis, may be required.

6. **Climate Action Plan Checklist for New Development**

7. **Color Renderings and 3D Model**

a. Provide a sufficient number of perspective color renderings of the proposed structure, photo simulated within the existing context of the built and natural surroundings, to represent how all elevations of the building will appear at a pedestrian scale/level.

b. Provide a digital model (using SketchUp or a similar program) of the proposed development and adjacent buildings within the broader streetscape area that can be presented and manipulated to represent the three dimensional qualities of the proposed building within the existing context of the built and natural surroundings.

8. **Architectural Design Plans** *(see checklist below)*

a. Initial submittal: Five (5) full-size sets (24" x 36") and five (5) half-size sets (11" x 17").

b. Once application deemed complete: 14 additional half-size sets of plans and a digital copy in .pdf format on a CD, a USB data key or emailed to the project planner.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PLANS

1. Cover Sheet

- Vicinity Map (clear and legible)
- Table of Contents
- General Project Information (project description, general plan, zoning, property owner, design professionals, etc.)
- A summary of land development calculations including, but not limited to, site area, lot coverage, setbacks, impervious surfaces, building floor area, parking stalls (required and proposed), and, when appropriate, number of beds, students and/or dining seats
- Rendering or graphic of proposed project

2. Site Plan ($\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ scale)

- Subject property showing all property lines and adjacent streets
- Location of all structures on subject property
- Location and dimensions of parking, driveway, and loading areas
- Location, size, type and proposed disposition of all existing trees over four-inches in diameter
- Landscape areas, walkways, fences, retaining walls, utility areas, and trash facilities

3. Floor Plans ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)

- Show existing and proposed development
- Identify details such as balconies, roof gardens, cabanas, etc.
NOTE: Floor plans for single-story buildings may be shown on the site plan.

4. Floor Area Calculation Diagram ($\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ scale)

- Gross floor area - measured to outside edge of wall and including all space enclosed by walls (habitable space, non-habitable space, accessory structures, basements)
- Net floor area - excluding all inner courts and/or shaft enclosures (stairwells, elevator shafts, etc)
- Existing floor area of structures to be removed

5. Building Elevations ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)

- Building materials and design details
- Roof pitch
- Roof-mounted equipment
- New signage being proposed
- Height
- Color(s)
- Fencing

9. Building Cross-Sections ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)

Provide at least two (2) cross-sections, taken from the highest ridge, showing existing and proposed grades, finished floor levels, wall plates, and building height to existing grade.

10. **Roof Plan** (1/4" = 1' scale)

- Roof pitch
- Existing roof to remain and new roof area
- All rooftop mechanical equipment and screening location(s)

11. **Landscape Plan** (1/4" = 1' scale)

- A conceptual planting plan that identifies all existing and proposed trees and plants
- Color photos of proposed trees, plants and other landscape features
- Hardscape, walkways, fences and retaining walls
- Utility areas and trash facilities
- A calculation showing:
 - Total hardscape area
 - Total softscape area

12. **Grading and Drainage Plan** (1/8" = 1' scale)

NOTE: The Grading and Drainage Plan shall be prepared by a registered civil engineer or a licensed architect.

- Location and elevation of benchmarks
- Elevation at street and neighboring property lines
- Pad elevation
- Finished floor elevation
- Tree location(s)
- Lot drainage pattern
- Existing and proposed contours
- Stormwater management measures to retain stormwater on site in accord with the Best Management Practices
- All existing and proposed underground utilities lines, meters and adjacent infrastructure

13. **Construction Management Plan**

Prepare a preliminary construction management plan that identifies anticipated truck routing and staging, construction worker parking plan (on-site and off-site) and pedestrian routing (sidewalk closures, detours, etc.). *See Construction Management Plan handout for more specific direction.*

14. **Streetscape Elevation**

Render proposed structure(s) in relation to development on adjoining properties. In the case of a corner lot, a streetscape of each street is required.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

1. **Mailed Notices** – All properties within 500 feet of the project site will receive a mailed notice of the public meeting 10-14 days before the meeting. The Planning Division will provide an area map showing all properties within a 500-foot radius. The applicant must provide two sets of blank stamped postcards (post office approved size) for all properties within the 500-foot radius.

NOTE: Notification for Commercial Districts, by City Council resolution, requires notification of all commercial tenants within the 500-foot radius area. The applicant is responsible for providing a name and

address list of all commercial businesses within the notification area. Additional blank stamped postcards for this address list will also be required

2. **On-Site Posting Requirement** – In addition to the mailed notices, a public notice billboard (four feet by six feet) with color renderings of the project will need to be installed at the project site at least 10 days prior to the first public meeting date. *See Public Notice Billboard handout for more specific direction.*
3. **Story Poles** – All new development projects are required to install story poles on the site at least two weeks prior to the first public meeting. *See Story Pole handout for more specific direction.*

CITY ACTION

The project will be reviewed at public meetings before the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC), the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and the City Council (CC). BPAC will hold a public meeting to provide a recommendation regarding the project's bicycle and pedestrian amenities. The PTC will hold a public meeting to review and provide a recommendation on all components of the project, and the City Council will review and take a final action on the project.

In order to approve the project, the PTC and CC must make specific findings on each of the following issues:

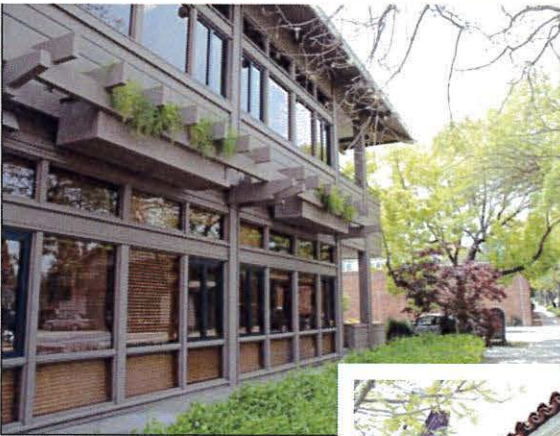
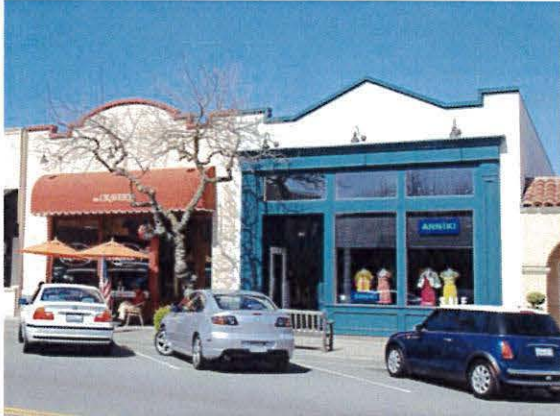
1. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the Los Altos General Plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area.
2. The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.
3. Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
4. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.
5. Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.
6. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.
7. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing.
8. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

ATTACHMENT F

Downtown Design Guidelines

Downtown Design Guidelines

City of Los Altos



Adopted
December 8, 2009

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY COUNCIL

Megan Satterlee	Mayor
David Casas	Mayor Pro Tem
Val Carpenter	
Ron Packard	
Lou Becker	

PLANNING COMMISSION

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Michael M. Abrams	Vice Chair
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Dan Brunello	
Jon Baer	
Phoebe Bressack	
Ron Labetich	
Ted Kokernak	
Doug Schmitz	
James Walgren	

CITY STAFF

Douglas J. Schmitz	City Manager
James Walgren, AICP	Community Development Director
David Kornfield, AICP	Planning Services Manager
Anne Stedler	Economic Development Coordinator

CONSULTANT

Larry L. Cannon	Cannon Design Group <i>Sausalito, California</i>
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INTRODUCTION

1



INTRODUCTION

Los Altos is blessed with a downtown of unique personality and vitality with a wide variety of shops, restaurants, offices, and services focused primarily on serving the local community. Constructed over a period of many decades, the development patterns are supportive of a strong pedestrian environment, and its structures offer a rich palette of the community's history.

Residents and visitors alike appreciate the special *Village Character* of Downtown Los Altos, but the identification of those features that are most responsible for the establishment of that highly prized character has often been elusive, and difficult to convey to property owners wishing to make changes to existing structures or build new ones. The intent of these design guidelines is to better describe the nature and elements of that *Village Character* by pointing out special features of existing downtown development and by examples from other communities with a similar village scale and character.

The design guidelines that follow provide practical and time-tested methods for preserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Downtown Los Altos village scale and character while offering ample opportunity for increased economic vitality. They supplement and reinforce the *Los Altos Downtown Design Plan*, and are intended to assist applicants in visualizing appropriate designs and in understanding community expectations, while providing fairness and consistency in the City's downtown development review and approval process.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

The community wishes to support and enhance the unique character of Downtown Los Altos. Property owners and developers will be expected to fit their projects into that existing fabric with sensitivity to their surroundings, and a recognition that the sum of the whole is more important than any single building or use. Buildings should be seen as unique, identifiable, and distinct from other buildings, but this distinction should be subtle, not dramatic.

A high quality of traditional architectural and landscape design is expected with abundant detail carried out in a manner that is authentic to the architectural style selected by the applicant.

Applicants are not required to meet all guidelines, but should be in substantial conformance with the design guidelines and the Required Findings set forth in the sidebar on page 11.

INTENT

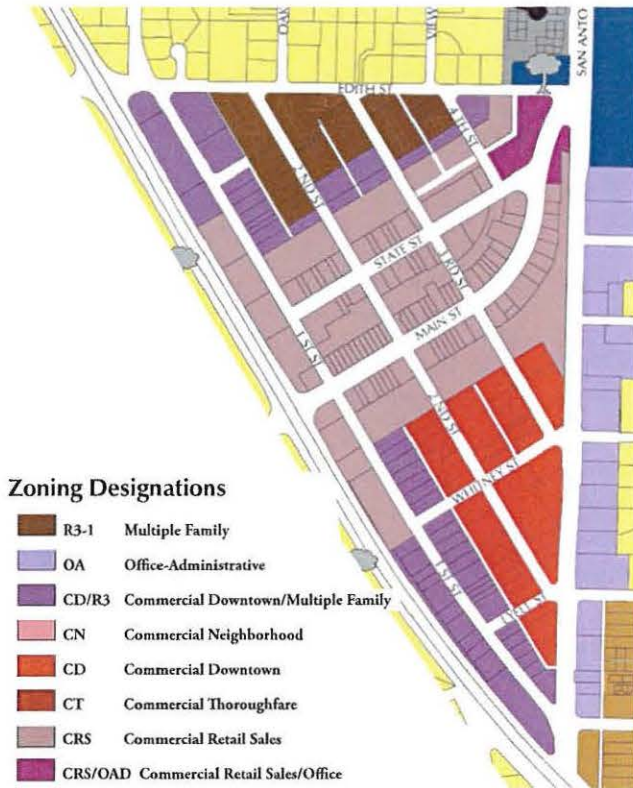
These guidelines are intended to accomplish the following:

- Support and enhance the unique Los Altos Downtown Village Character.
- Maintain and enhance an attractive Downtown pedestrian environment.
- Provide a mix of uses to meet the needs of community residents and visitors.
- Encourage increased Downtown vitality with additional retail shops, restaurants, offices and residents.
- Encourage creative design and architectural diversity.
- Encourage appropriate historic preservation.
- Encourage sustainable design and development.
- Establish a strong sense of entry at Downtown gateways.
- Provide adequate, attractive and convenient public parking.
- Encourage the maintenance and upgrading of uses, properties and signage.
- Encourage signage appropriate to the Downtown Village scale and Character.
- Implement the Los Altos Downtown Design Plan.

The city will consider development incentives for projects that implement or preserve elements of the Downtown Design Plan (e.g., paseos and courtyards) on a case-by-case basis.

For City staff assistance in the development review process, please contact the City's Planning Department at (650) 947-2750

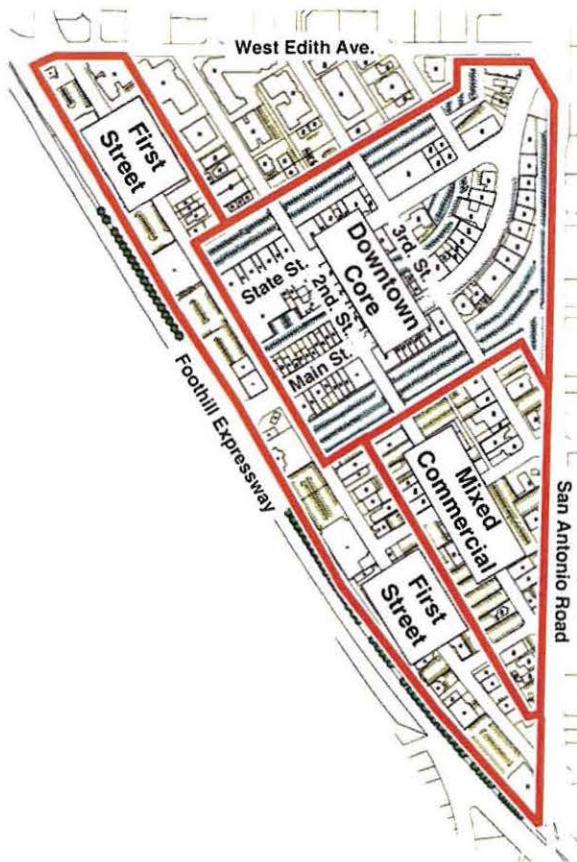
1



Zoning Designations

- R3-1 Multiple Family
- OA Office-Administrative
- CD/R3 Commercial Downtown/Multiple Family
- CN Commercial Neighborhood
- CD Commercial Downtown
- CT Commercial Thoroughfare
- CRS Commercial Retail Sales
- CRS/OAD Commercial Retail Sales/Office

Downtown Zoning



Downtown Design Guidelines Districts

APPLICABILITY

These design guidelines apply to all design review applications for new construction, additions, exterior facade changes, landscaping and signage.

The guidelines are in addition to and subordinate to the zoning regulations. The five downtown zoning districts covered by these design guidelines are shown on the map to the left. Full Zoning Code information for the downtown area can be found on the City's web site at:

www.losaltos.ca.gov

GUIDELINES ORGANIZATION

These guidelines are focused on the commercial areas contained within the triangle bounded by Foothill Expressway, San Antonio Road, and West Edith Avenue.

The guidelines are divided into three sections to reflect the major use areas of Downtown Los Altos. Note that some districts may contain more than one zoning category.

The guidelines set forth in the Downtown Core District establish the level of community expectations relative to architectural form, village character elements, and design quality and details for the whole of the downtown area. They should be reviewed by applicants for projects in all zones.

Downtown Core District

This district is the primary pedestrian retail area of downtown focused on Main Street and State Street. Its structures are closely related one to the next with a great deal of retail continuity, and a small scale village character. Most of the Downtown Core District is within the Downtown Parking District.

Mixed Commercial District

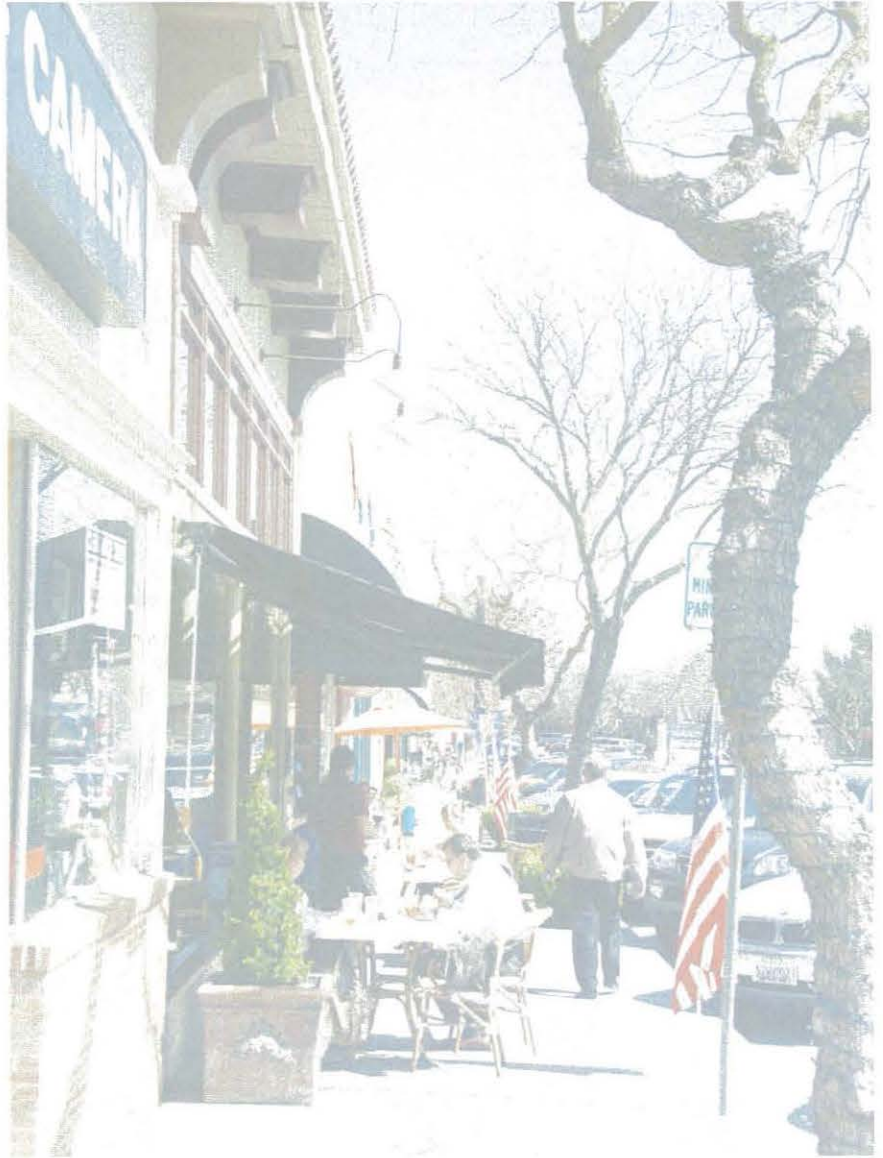
Located adjacent to San Antonio Road, this district, while still heavily pedestrian oriented, has a looser physical texture, somewhat larger scale buildings, and more stand alone structures. Supplemental design guidelines are provided to recognize the district's different physical conditions and uses. The intent is to accommodate larger uses while maintaining a scale and character that is supportive of downtown's village character.

First Street District

This area fronting on First Street contains a wide variety of uses, and is more strongly vehicle-oriented than the retail core area. The intent is to accommodate a wide mix of uses in a manner sensitive to the village character of downtown.

**DOWNTOWN VILLAGE
CHARACTER**

2



DOWNTOWN VILLAGE CHARACTER

Downtown Los Altos has grown and changed over a span of decades through incremental changes and the efforts of many property and business owners. The area serves as the heart of the community through a mix of retail, office, residential, institutional, civic and service uses as well as social gathering spaces. Today, it is a closely knit series of subdistricts with slightly differing use emphases and design characteristics, held together by an overall village scale and character. That unique scale and character has been nurtured over the years, and has become even more of a community asset as many other downtowns in the Bay Area have grown ever larger and lost much of their earlier charm.

Village Character is often hard to define, and harder to preserve as retailing and office development trends in downtown areas have tended to favor national retail chains and prototypical designs. Yet, there are communities determined to preserve the uniqueness of their village scale and character downtowns. In the development of these design guidelines, existing features of Downtown Los Altos have been used as models, and lessons learned from other downtowns have been integrated as examples of effective ways to preserve and enhance village scale and character.

Some of the major features of village character are listed in the sidebar to the right, and illustrated by the annotated photographs of Downtown Los Altos below and on the following pages.



Individual tenant identities with wide diversity in parapet shapes, building heights and awnings

VILLAGE CHARACTER FEATURES

- Traditional Village and Main Street architectural styles.
- Wide diversity of building forms.
- Larger buildings broken up into smaller segments.
- Courtyards and paseos with secondary uses.
- Mixture of continuous storefronts and stand alone buildings.
- Varied building top profiles and details.
- Wide variety of interesting architectural and storefront detail.
- Diverse mix of pedestrian scaled storefronts and signage.
- Individual store personalities.
- Variety of storefront profiles with entry vestibules, facade recesses and landscaping.
- Landscaping integrated with the storefronts
- Limited blank walls.
- Wide variety of natural building materials.
- Abundant landscaping and pedestrian amenities.
- Wide variety of pedestrian paving.
- Preserved historic resources.
- Pleasant and interesting parking-to-shopping paths.
- Second floors strongly related to the street front.
- Attractive parking areas.
- Residential units included in the downtown mix of uses.
- Public social gathering places.
- Integrated art and whimsical details.
- Use of natural materials.
- Subtle lighting.

VILLAGE CHARACTER

2



Landscaping and amenity buffers between pedestrians and parked cars

VILLAGE CHARACTER FEATURES



Great diversity in awnings, signage and sign lighting



Facade setbacks and outside seating

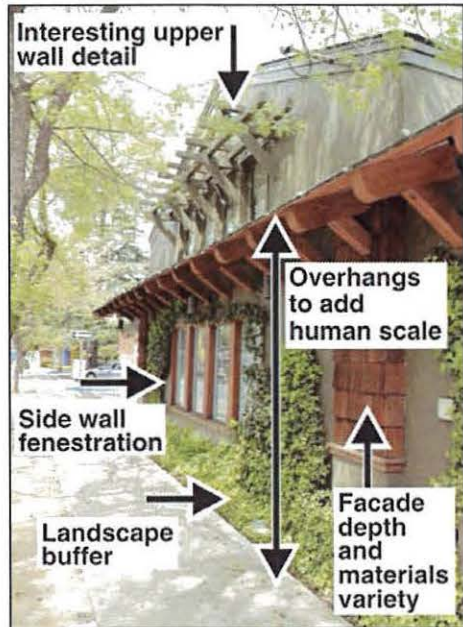


Visually interesting entries with natural materials

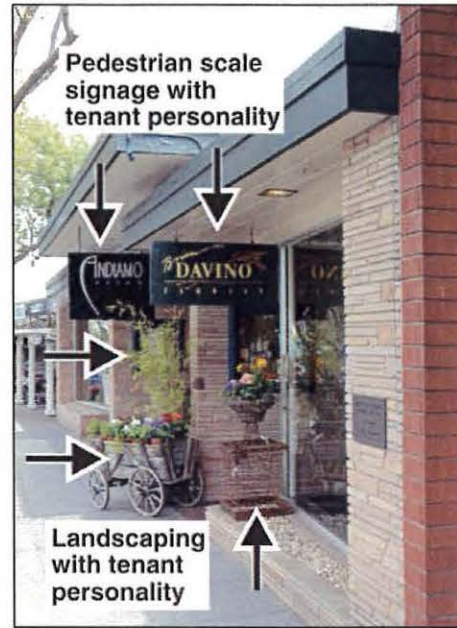


Variety of building forms

VILLAGE CHARACTER FEATURES



Side wall breakup and visual interest



Pedestrian scale signage and landscaping with personality



Public social spaces



Strong presence of second floor uses on the street



Intimate courtyards and paseos



Residential units included in the downtown mix of uses

VILLAGE CHARACTER

2



Small offices with personality and human scale

VILLAGE CHARACTER FEATURES



Larger offices with interesting human scale details and sensitive materials selection



Entry vestibules and friendly entry doors



Reminders of the downtown's architectural history



Large offices broken up into village scale buildings



Pedestrian scaled storefronts

**DOWNTOWN CORE
DISTRICT**

3



DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

The Downtown Core District is the very heart of the downtown. It contains a wide diversity of retail and other uses, all contained within a strongly pedestrian-oriented environment. The size of the area makes parking once and visiting multiple stores relatively easy. And, street frontages are visually interesting. Individual buildings and shops have unique personalities, and a great deal of attention has been given to landscaping within both the public and private realms.

The goal of these design guidelines is to retain and enhance the uniqueness of the district, and to integrate changes to individual parcels into the fabric of the area – including parcels and buildings, which by historic standards, may be somewhat larger than the current pattern.

3.1 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The compactness of the Downtown Core is such that it lends itself well to parking once, and walking to multiple destinations. For that to be successful, the pedestrian experience at every point from getting out of one's car to moving throughout the downtown must be a pleasant one with clarity of organization and delight to the eye and senses.

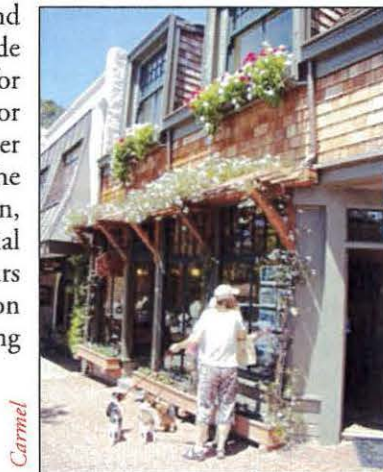
The creation of a successful pedestrian environment is a joint public-private effort. The guidelines below address the major contributors to the creation of a village scale and character.

3.1.1 Provide uses and activities to enhance and complement the Downtown environment

Uses and activities do not normally fall within the purview of design guidelines. However, they are often critical to the success of individual projects and the downtown as a whole. The following are guidelines for the early planning stages of projects within the Downtown Core District.

a) Explore opportunities for office and residential uses on the second floor.

Second floor office and residential uses provide valuable support for downtown ground floor uses as well as a greater sense of place for the downtown. In addition, they have the potential for extending the hours of downtown utilization beyond normal retailing hours.



3

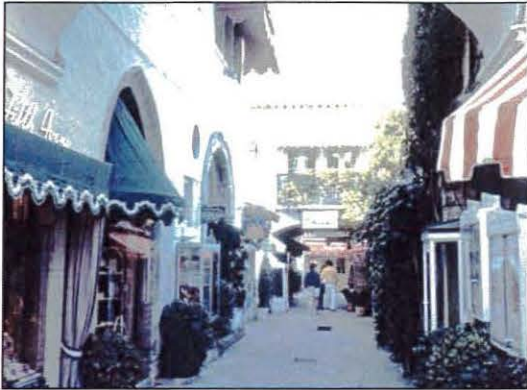
REQUIRED FINDINGS

For any commercial project in the city to receive design review approval, the Planning Commission must be able to make the following findings:

1. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the General Plan and any specific plan, design guidelines, and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area.
2. The proposal has architectural integrity, and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.
3. Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
4. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.
5. Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.
6. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.
7. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view, and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material, and detailing.
8. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

3

Santa Barbara



Courtyards and paseos can increase downtown vitality and economic success through development intensity and tenant variety.

Santa Barbara



Valencia



Clusters of varied dining opportunities can create a distinctive sense of place and an enhanced street environment after normal working hours.

Valencia



Outdoor dining is strongly encouraged.

b) Explore opportunities for additional tenants through the use of courtyards and paseos.

Current uses are largely contained within one-story structures, often containing only a single tenant. Opportunities for additional retail, service commercial and office tenants, in courtyards or along paseos, abound. They can be especially useful for deep parcels where primary tenants do not need the full depth of the lot. Their use could enhance individual property utilization while supplying additional foot traffic to support other downtown uses. Existing paseos and courtyards should be preserved. Arbors and trellises are encouraged in paseos and courtyards (see example below).

Irvine



Guidelines for Courtyards:

- Enclose on at least two sides by buildings.
- Remain open to the sky.
(Arbors and trellises are allowed.)
- Minimum width: 20 feet.
- Minimum area: 400 square feet.

Guidelines for Paseos:

- Minimum width: 10 feet for through-block paseos.
4 feet for entries to courtyards or individual single businesses.
- Courtyards along the paseo are encouraged.

c) Explore opportunities for active evening uses.

Consider nearby uses when planning for property design changes. There may be opportunities for adding to an existing cluster of after-hours uses with outdoor dining or complementary uses (e.g., bookstore for browsing near restaurants or coffee houses).

3.1.2 Design landscaping and open space to enhance the Downtown Village Character

Downtown open spaces and landscaping are as much responsible for the area's uniqueness as are the buildings. They provide the framework to unify an otherwise potentially chaotic collection of eclectic building designs into a strong sense of place. Some of the main features of Downtown's open space and landscape system include:

- Continuous pedestrian links between uses and between parking and storefront clusters

- Separations between pedestrians and automobiles
- Quiet and intimate open spaces off of main walkway areas
- Varied paving colors and textures
- Multiple and varied pedestrian amenities
- Sheltering Chinese Pistache trees along pedestrian paths
- Individualized landscaping at storefronts and shop entries
- Landscaping with seasonal blooms
- An overall sense of informality and variety

a) **Design storefronts and building walls along pedestrian frontages to accommodate special paving and landscaping.**



Use abundant landscaping to emphasize storefront entries.



Use landscaping to soften side walls along pedestrian walks.



Use special textured paving in open space areas to separate them from high traffic sidewalks and to provide a human scale.



Landscaped tree wells and planter strips are the desired approach to separating pedestrians and cars.

b) **Utilize textured paving in all paving areas adjacent to the public sidewalks.**

Brick pavers and other modular units are ideal in providing a color and scale change to open space areas that are linked to or adjacent to sidewalk areas. They complement the smaller scale size of the areas, and assist in reinforcing the village scale of the downtown. One example is shown in the photograph to the upper right. Exposed aggregate concrete with brick or wood dividers, or permeable paving, are other acceptable alternatives. Avoid plain or colored concrete paving with scored joints. While less expensive than hand-placed pavers, it lacks the necessary visual quality to enhance the village character.

c) **Enhance tree wells with landscaping.**

Planting strips and pockets are effective in adding visual interest to sidewalks and open spaces, and serve well in separating pedestrians from adjacent traffic and parked cars. They also provide infiltration areas for stormwater runoff. Flowering plants or ones with distinctive forms and colors, as shown in the examples to the right, are especially appropriate.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3



Carmel

Courtyard and paseo treatment should be equal in quality and detail to the primary street frontages.



Santa Barbara



Santa Barbara

Incorporate fountains and other forms of public art into courtyards, paseos and other open spaces.

d) Design courtyards and paseos to invite pedestrian use and enhance adjacent uses.

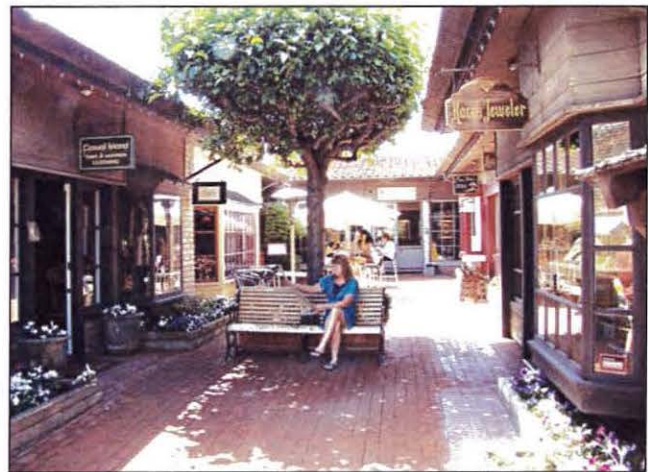
Landscaping, pedestrian amenities, storefront treatments and signage in courtyards and paseos should be equal in quality and detail to the primary street frontages. One example is shown to the left.

e) Seek opportunities to incorporate fountains and public art into open spaces.

Fountains and other forms of public art add uniqueness to the downtown pedestrian environment, increase the attractiveness of the area to a wide range of tenants, and encourage longer shopping stays.

f) Provide abundant pedestrian amenities.

Benches and other places to sit, shade from the sun, and other amenities also encourage shoppers to linger and extend their time downtown. These amenities should be supportive of the desired village character and scale. Selection of natural materials, like wood, and high quality metal of a traditional design, rather than concrete, are most likely to be successful. Planter edges can also serve to provide convenient seating near shop fronts.



Carmel

g) Integrate pedestrian scale lighting into the landscape of open spaces.



Pasadena

3.1.3 Design pedestrian and vehicle crossing points with attention to pedestrian safety

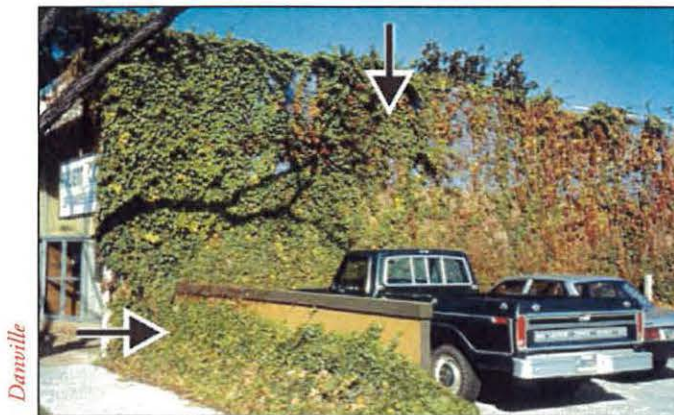
Ingress and egress points for parking lots and parking structures as well as pedestrian crosswalks are potential areas of pedestrian and vehicular movement conflicts.

- a) **Provide visual clues to alert drivers that pedestrians have the right of way.**
 - Provide special paving textures and/or colors for pedestrian crossings at intersections and parking areas.
 - Provide special signage where driver visibility of crossing pedestrians might be limited.
- b) **Avoid landscaping and other obstructions that could limit views of traffic and pedestrians at crossing points.**
 - Keep landscaping below driver eye height.
 - Avoid trees and signs that might block drivers' views of pedestrians about to cross their path.

3.1.4 Locate and design trash enclosures and private parking areas to be inconspicuous and enhance the visual environment

Adequate parking and trash disposal areas are essential to the success of the downtown. However, accommodating them must be accomplished in a manner that is inconspicuous and enhances the area's village scale and character.

- a) **Improve existing private parking lots when conversion to usable commercial space is not possible.**
 - Provide low walls and landscaping for parking spaces adjacent to streets and pedestrian ways.
 - Soften walls with vine and/or tree landscaping. Two examples are shown below.



Use low walls to screen the view of cars from adjacent sidewalks and landscaping to soften blank walls.



Use trees and architectural features to buffer walls at parking and service areas.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Pleasanton



b) Integrate trash enclosures into the building.

- Provide interior trash rooms whenever possible.
- Where trash enclosures are adjacent to buildings, match the trash enclosure building materials, details and colors to those of the building (See examples on page 36).
- Where integration into the building is not possible, provide upgraded trash enclosures with finished and durable materials as well as buffering landscaping. Avoid exposed concrete block unless enhanced split face block textures and colors are utilized, block joints are visually minimized with colored mortar, and extensive vine landscaping is provided to soften the walls' appearance. Three examples are shown below and to the left.

Mountain View



Valencia



3.2 ARCHITECTURE

Downtown Los Altos contains an eclectic mix of architectural styles and forms, indicative of its growth over many decades. While there are individual buildings of architectural merit, the character of downtown owes more to the wide stylistic variety, small scale, and visual richness of its structures than to their architectural distinction. In the future, the emphasis will be on combining individual architectural excellence with building forms and details that reinforce the small scale village character of the Downtown Core District. A diversity of design styles will be encouraged and expected.

Over time, the downtown retail core has evolved as an area with substantial pedestrian/retail continuity and an emphasis upon an expression of the unique personalities of its individual businesses. The following design guidelines are intended to reinforce that existing framework, scale and character.

3.2.1 Continue the pattern and scale established by existing buildings

- a) **Maintain and reinforce the underlying downtown 25-foot module along all street frontages. Some techniques for this emphasis include the following:**



Changing roof parapet height and/or shape.



Utilizing different building heights, architectural styles, and forms.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

These guidelines are not intended to establish or dictate a specific style beyond the desire to maintain Downtown Los Altos' small town character and attention to human scale and detail. In general, diverse and traditional architectural styles that have stood the test of time are preferred.

Designs merely repeated from other cities or without thought to the special qualities of Los Altos are strongly discouraged, and unlikely to be accepted.

CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE

The City will work with applicants to adapt critical functional features of prototype plans to their Los Altos sites, but will not accept standard plans, building forms, elevations, materials, or colors that do not relate to the site, adjacent development, or Los Altos' community character.

Applicants are encouraged to meet early in the process with the City's Planning Services Department staff to discuss their plans and building prototypes.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The City of Los Altos supports sustainable design in the construction of new facilities and the remodeling of existing buildings. Applicants are expected to utilize creativity in adapting sustainable design elements to the unique qualities of Downtown Los Altos' visual environment. City staff will work closely with applicants to achieve this goal.

Special attention will be expected of all applicants in the following areas:

- Use of energy efficient HVAC systems
- Use of solar energy
- Reduction of energy demands through simple techniques such as operable windows and sun control methods
- Minimization of storm water runoff
- Use of recycled materials
- Maximization of insulation and energy efficient lighting

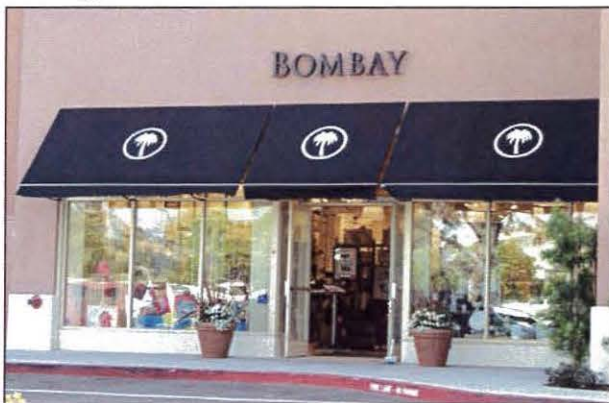
3

Laguna Beach



Utilizing different awning forms and/or materials, as shown above and below, matching the predominant building module.

Corte Madera

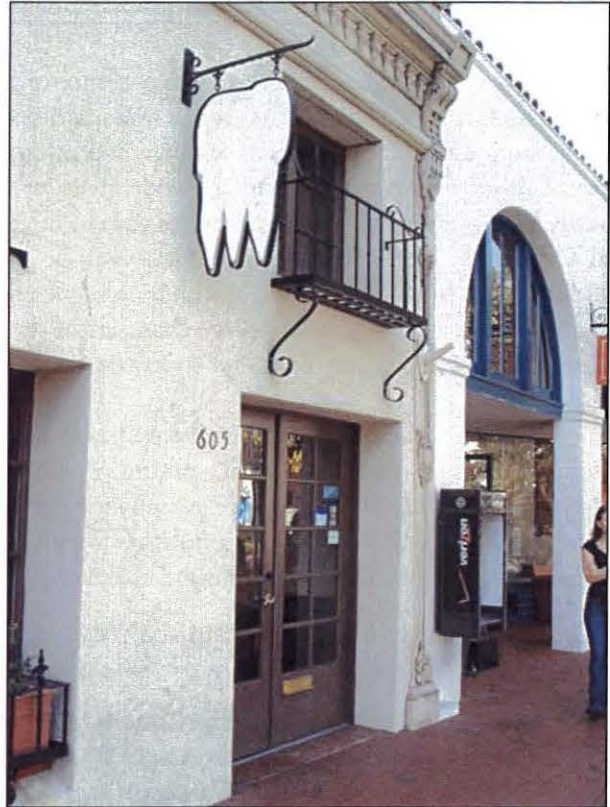


Santa Barbara



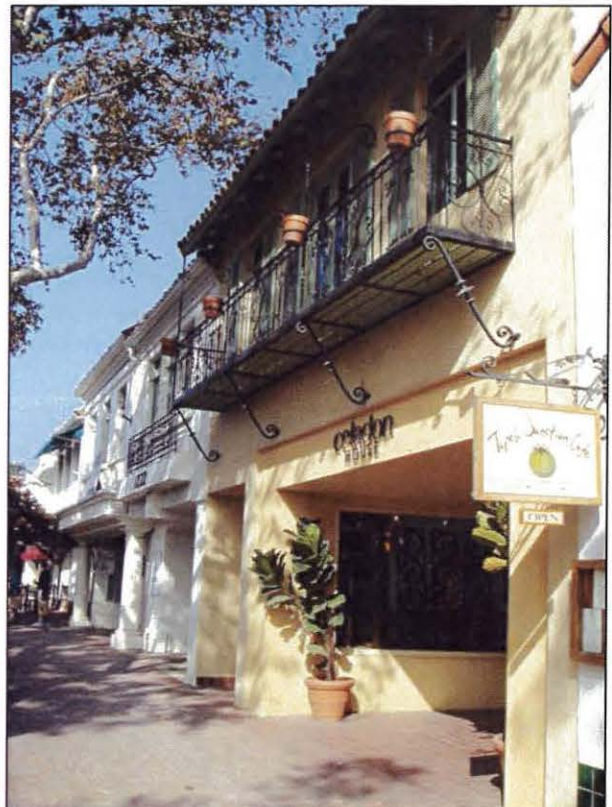
Defining storefronts with projecting piers and emphasizing tenants' unique store personalities.

Santa Barbara



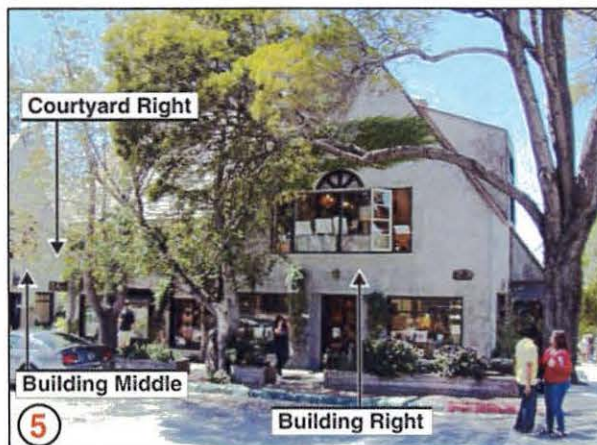
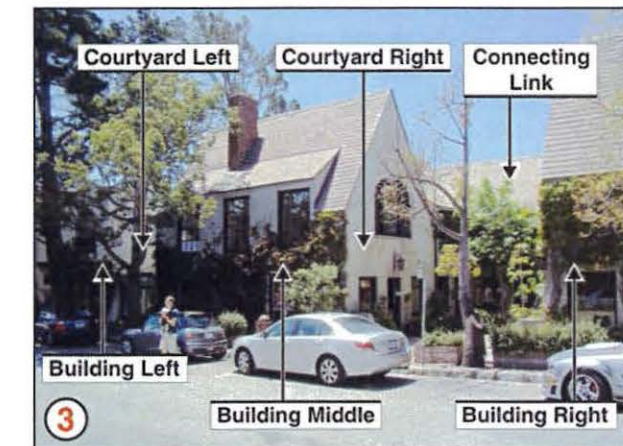
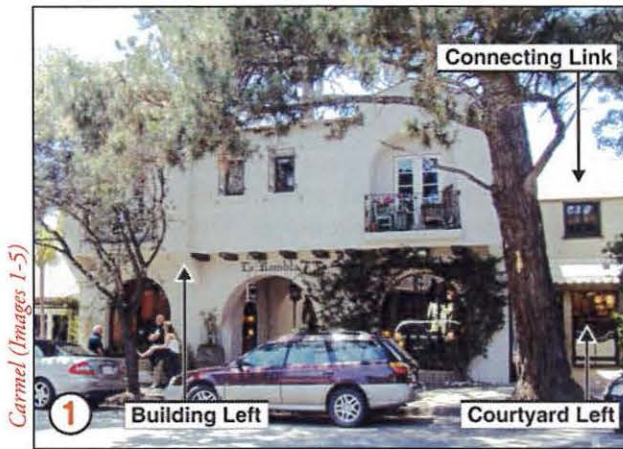
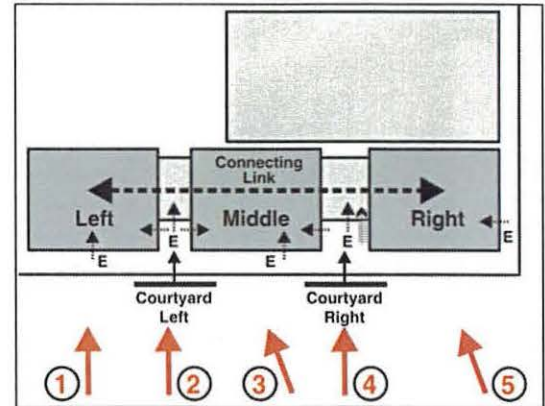
Changing storefront type and details.

Santa Barbara



Reinforcing the module with second floor projections and details.

- b) **Break larger buildings up into smaller components.**
- Divide longer facades into individual smaller segments with individual design forms and architectural styles. One option is shown on this page. Development incentives may be available.
 - Provide recessed courtyard entries between individualized building segments. These courtyards should be at least 20 feet wide and 20 feet deep with substantial landscaping and pedestrian amenities. These are excellent locations for entries to shops and/or to second floor uses. The example of a larger structure in Carmel which utilized these techniques is shown in the diagram and photos on this page. See also the photo example from Los Gatos at the bottom of page 31.



Left courtyard features shop entries, display windows, special paving and landscaping.



Right courtyard features shop entries, stairs to second floor uses, special paving and landscaping.

Differing architectural forms and styles separated by courtyards assist in fitting this large building complex into a village scale.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Los Gatos



Front facades are predominantly display windows and entries.

Los Gatos



Sidewall display window provides a transition between the primary and secondary frontages.

Los Gatos



Sidewall piers relate the sidewall facade to the shop fronts, and landscaping softens the wall.

Beverly Hills



These contemporary facades fit into this streetscape due to their small scale, and the use of high quality materials and crisp detailing.

c) Create continuous building frontages.

- Avoid blank walls along sidewalks and paseos. Display windows and entries should occupy at least 60% of the wall areas on primary frontages. Walls along side streets and paseos may have a lesser amount of glazing, but should have display windows – especially near the primary facade. Other non-glazed wall areas should be enhanced with wall plane changes, landscaping (e.g., landscaped trellises and lattices), and/or special architectural detailing (see example to the left).
- Minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts by locating any driveway or loading areas away from main pedestrian routes.

3.2.2 Design for diversity with sensitivity to adjacent development

a) Select traditional architectural styles.

- Traditional architectural styles have been developed over an extended period of time, and generally fit comfortably with other traditional styles in a downtown commercial environment. Within the traditional styles of building form and facade organization, however, design creativity is encouraged to adapt the style to current needs and a fresh look. Examples of traditional commercial styles may be found in the resources identified in the sidebar on page 27. Adaptations of traditional residential styles may also be appropriate to the village character of Downtown Los Altos.
- The depth and authenticity of detailing found in traditional architectural styles will best harmonize well with current buildings in Downtown Los Altos. However, well designed modern facade designs may be acceptable, depending on location, materials, and the quality of the details. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Examples are shown below and to the bottom left.

Pasadena



The warmth of the materials and the variety of smaller scale detailing help this modern facade to fit into a streetscape of diverse architecture.

- b) **Relate the facade designs to adjacent structures.**
 - Respect the scale of adjacent buildings.
 - Relate the placement of defining elements and details to those on adjacent structures. One example from Downtown Los Altos is shown below.



Matching parapet and window heights help relate these adjacent buildings.

- c) **Design with architectural integrity and continuity.**
 - Exterior details should be authentic to the style. Sources of assistance in understanding traditional architectural design principles and details may be found in the reference sources noted in the sidebar to the right.

- Design buildings as whole units. The design of upper floors and ground level walls, piers and other supporting elements should be designed as a unified whole.

- Preserve historically significant structures, whenever possible. Refer to Appendix B for a list of downtown historic resources.

- Preserve worthy elements of the existing buildings. Recycle and reuse distinctive design elements.

- Where buildings were once architecturally distinctive but have been altered over time, restore the lost integrity of form and details, if possible.



The upper and lower facades of this building work as one unified structure.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND DETAILS RESOURCES

- **The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture**
Richard Longstreth
Rowman Atimira 2000
- **Traditional Construction Patterns: Design & Detail Rules of Thumb**
Stephen A. Mouzon
McGraw-Hill 2004

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Beverly Hills



Avoid tall entries like the one above in favor of pedestrian scaled entries like the one shown below.

Los Gatos

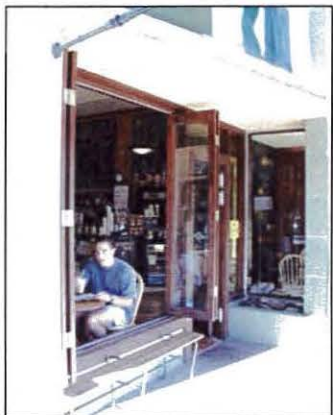


Carmel



Operable windows are encouraged for restaurants, cafes and coffee shops.

San Anselmo



3.2.3 Design to enhance Downtown's Village Character and pedestrian scale

a) Vary storefront treatments.

A strong feature of Downtown Los Altos' village character is the variety and individuality of the storefronts.

- Provide significant variations between adjacent storefronts occupied by different businesses, including those within the same building structure. These variations should include display windows, entry doors, awnings and signage. For frontages over twenty-five feet in width with the same tenant, variations should also be provided to avoid long facades of the same storefront design.
- Size store entries to the human figure and normal entry door heights. Avoid over scaled, tall entries such as the one to the above left.
- A wide variety of storefront treatments is desirable. Some may have bulkheads below display windows while others may have larger areas of glass extending to the floor.
- Outdoor dining and operable windows are strongly encouraged for restaurants and cafes. Two examples of operable windows are shown below to the left.

b) Design storefronts to allow landscaping and special paving.

- Landscaping may occur in a variety of forms as shown in the examples below and on the following page. Flowers are strongly encouraged to add color and interest.
- See also Guidelines 3.1.2 a) on page 19.

Permanent brick planters.



Carmel

Planters and climbing vines.



Carmel

Victoria, BC



Built-in planters and hanging pots.

Pasadena



Trellises and lattices with climbing vines.

Los Gatos



Recessed window boxes.

Los Gatos



Mixed treatment in larger setbacks.

Carmel



Window box planters, paving pockets and climbing vines.

Pasadena



Landscaped setbacks and potted plants.

Los Gatos



Planter pots.

Carmel



Wall-mounted pots.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Carmel



Vestibules need not be rectangular in shape.

Santa Barbara



Vestibules with more facets can be used to increase the exposure of goods in storefront windows.

Carmel



A simple, narrow vestibule with a well detailed door may work best for narrow store frontages.

c) **Provide entry vestibules.**

Vestibules emphasize shop entries, and allow ingress and egress to businesses without impeding pedestrian movement on adjacent sidewalks. They also allow for increasing display window exposure.

- Vestibules may have a wide variety of shapes, from simple rectangular indentations to larger and more complex shapes. Some examples are shown in photos to the left.
- Use special paving materials and colors to clearly define the vestibule areas and separate them from the adjacent public sidewalk.
- The use of wood doors with glazing and raised panel details, rather than metal and glass doors, is strongly encouraged to add warmth to the shop entries.
- Dutch doors and doors with divided light windows are encouraged to link the shop interior to passing pedestrian traffic and add visual interest to the entry.

Los Altos



A wood door and brick paving contribute to this inviting shop entry.

Oakland



Dutch doors offer an inviting, friendly entry to passing shoppers.

- d) **Utilize awnings and canopies at windows and entries.**
- A variety of awning types is encouraged. They may be traditional, as shown to the right, or unique (see the wood shutter awnings below). They should also be distinct to the store's tenant. For multiple tenant buildings, avoid making all of the awnings the same.
 - Keep the mounting height at a human scale - with the valence height not more than 8 feet above the sidewalk level.



San Jose



Beverly Hills

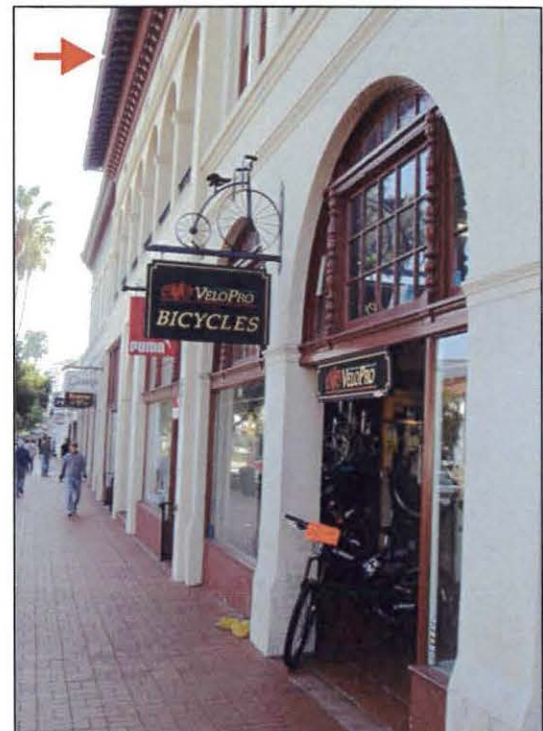
- e) **Provide cornices and building tops consistent with the architectural style.**
- Avoid unfinished wall tops in favor of projecting cornice features or roof overhangs. Examples are shown below and to the right.



Los Gatos



Los Gatos



Santa Barbara

Designing larger buildings to resemble a collection of smaller individual buildings, as shown to the left, is preferred in the Downtown Core. Larger structures with varied store fronts, as shown above, may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Carmel



Architectural features and shop entries are encouraged on corner parcels.

Carmel



f) Provide special features for buildings located at street corners (See examples to the left).

g) Emphasize entries and display windows.

- Make shop entries as open and inviting as possible.
- Consider landscaping and special paving to add visual interest.
- Keep all window glazing transparent. Avoid tinted glass in favor of awnings and other shading devices for sun control.

h) Utilize natural materials.

Wood, stone, and brick can provide warmth at storefronts, and enhance the feeling of village scale and character.

- Wood doors and window frames are strongly encouraged.
- Avoid synthetic stone.
- Tile is discouraged except for bulkheads below display windows and for decorative accents. One good example is shown below.

Ojai



Sanita Barbara



Landscaping and open doors can add great appeal to both individual shops and the street as a whole

Carmel



Providing large display windows and inviting entries enliven the street frontage, and encourage shoppers to enter the store.

i) Enhance the pedestrian experience with interesting architectural details.

- Consider bay window displays where walls might otherwise be blank, as shown in the example below.



Carmel

- Architectural details should be high quality and appropriate to the architectural style.
- Individual trim elements should be scaled to be or resemble proportions that could be handled and installed by hand. Elements on any portion of the structure should not be inflated in size to respond strictly to building scale, but should also have a relationship with human scale.

j) Provide special storefront and facade lighting.

Nighttime lighting of the building and display windows can add greatly to the downtown's sense of vitality and safety, and can encourage window shopping by those who may be dining in downtown restaurants.

- Lighting should be subtle.
- The use of decorative lighting, concealed fixtures, or pin lights are all possibilities.
- Decorative lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the architectural style of the building and storefront.



Santa Barbara



Pleasanton

Small details like these pots on shelves at the restaurant entry can add greatly to the village scale and character.



Pasadena

True or simulated divided light windows, decorative lights, and landscaping can add special visual interest to a storefront.



Carmel

These small decorative wall-mounted fixtures and the concealed lighting of the display window provide subtle lighting for the building, merchandise and signage.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3



Carmel

Tile stairs and business directory sign



Pasadena

Awnings and window boxes at the second level help relate those uses to the street level

3.2.4 Design second floor facades to complement the streetscape and Village Character

a) Provide second floor entries that are equal in quality and detail to storefront entries.

Some techniques to accomplish this emphasis include:
See example to the left and below.

- Special awning or roof element.
- Wrought iron gate.
- Decorative tile stair treads and risers.
- Special lights.
- Decorative street address numbers or tiles.
- Plaque signs for upper floor business tenants.



Carmel

Second floor entry awning

b) Relate second floor uses to the pedestrian environment on the street level.

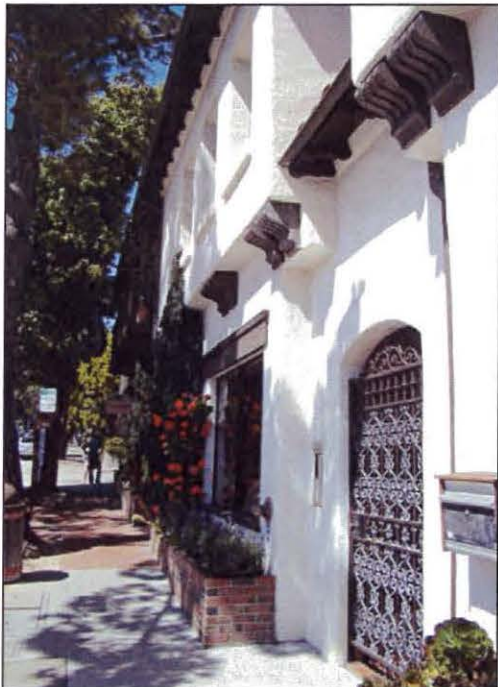
Some methods of achieving this include the following:
See examples on this and the following page,

- Second floor overhangs
- Bay windows
- Decks
- Balconies
- Planters.



Carmel

Projecting bay windows



Carmel

Second floor overhang and wrought iron gate at second floor entry



Carmel

Upper floor deck



St. Helena

Small balcony with landscaping



Montecito

Wide balcony

- c) **Utilize operable windows in traditional styles.**
- Recess windows at least 3 inches from the face of the wall.
 - Use vertical proportions for individual windows.
 - Separate individual or groups of windows by solid wall masses, and treat windows as punched openings.
 - Avoid ribbon windows and curtain wall treatments.



Carmel

Colorful flower pots

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Los Altos



Building facades facing parking lots may be treated the same as street-facing facades, as above, or may be treated in a more simple manner, as below.

Los Altos



3.2.5 Design compatible parking plaza oriented entries and facades

Facades facing parking lots may be treated similarly to street-facing facades if they serve as a second entry, or they may be treated more simply, but will be expected to receive consistent design attention and landscaping. Two current examples in the Downtown Core District are shown below.

3.2.6 Integrate utilities and building services into the overall building design

a) Integrate mechanical and trash rooms into the building whenever possible.

- Where not feasible, use screen walls to match the design, materials and finish of those of the main building (See examples below).

b) Add trellises, lattices, and landscaping to screen and soften exterior mechanical equipment and trash enclosures.

Two examples are shown below.



Ojai



Los Gatos

c) Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be concealed from public view (street or adjacent buildings).

- Existing rooftop mechanical equipment shall be concealed or relocated out of view whenever a roof is replaced and when equipment is upgraded or replaced to any extent that requires a building permit.
- Locate on a portion of the rooftop that is not visible to the public or locate behind roof forms, parapets or screens that are compatible with the architectural character of the structure.

3.2.7 Design larger structures to be sensitive to the unique scale and character of Downtown Los Altos

a) Adapt corporate prototype designs to relate both in form and scale to the adjacent downtown fabric.

- An Apple store prototype example in Walnut Creek and its modification for Downtown Los Gatos, shown to the right, illustrates one way in which a corporate prototype design can be modified to fit into a small scale downtown environment.
- The GAP store in Los Gatos, shown below, has been designed to appear as two structures to better fit into the existing downtown fabric.



Walnut Creek

This store in Walnut Creek illustrates the standard Apple prototype.



Los Gatos



Los Gatos

The standard Apple prototype was modified in the Town of Los Gatos to better fit with the existing downtown scale and character.

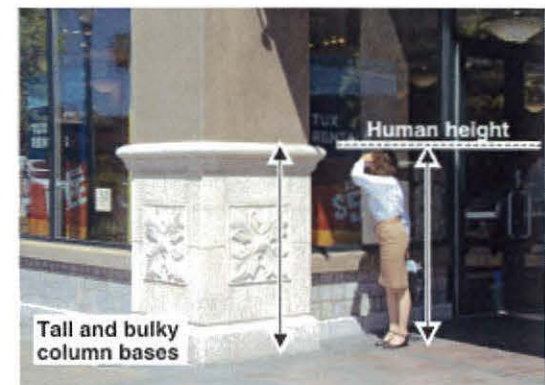
b) Avoid architectural styles and monumental building elements that do not relate to the small human scale of Downtown Los Altos.

- The structures shown below and to the right are well designed, but would be out of place in Downtown Los Altos. These are all examples of what should not be done.



Walnut Creek

Don't use exaggerated tall doors



Walnut Creek

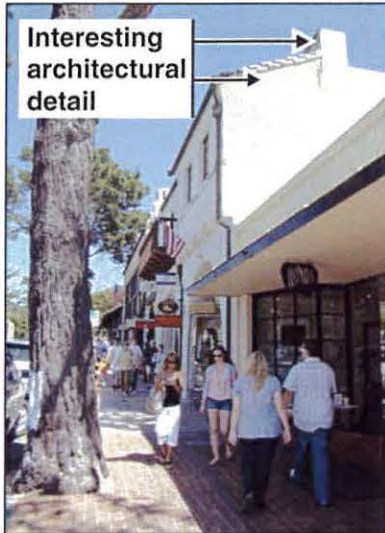
Don't use over-size building elements



Walnut Creek

Don't use large arches

3



Carmel



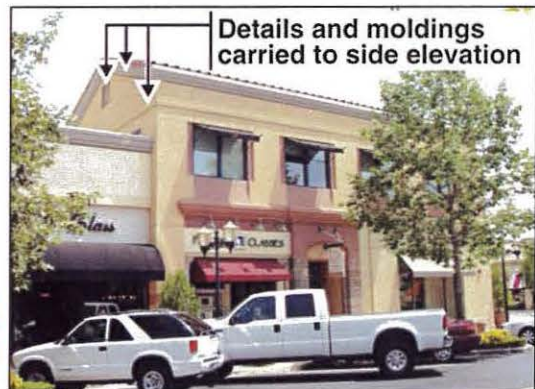
Telluride



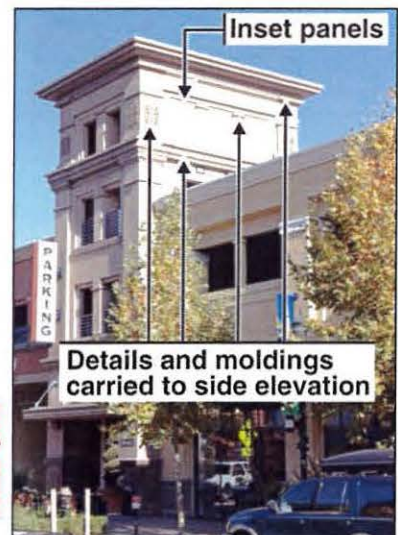
Telluride

c) Provide special design treatment for visible sidewalls of structures that are taller than their immediate neighbors.

- Sidewall windows are encouraged where codes allow and adequate fire protection can be provided.
- Employ design techniques to relate the visible sidewalls to front facades. Some common techniques include the following:
 - * Repeating front facade finished materials, decorative details and mouldings.
 - * Carrying front facade cornices and wall top projections around all sides of the upper floor.
 - * Providing varied parapet heights to avoid a box-like appearance.
 - * Utilizing gable and hip roofs to vary the height and appearance of side walls.
 - * Treating side walls with inset panels.
 - * Integrating interesting architectural details.
 - * Stepping back the front facade of upper floors to vary the side wall profile.



Valencia



Walnut Creek

3.2.8 Design and detail parking structures to complement Downtown’s Village Scale and Character

- a) Locate vehicular entries to allow ingress and egress from streets other than Main Street and State Street.
- b) Place as much of the parking below grade as possible.
- c) Provide commercial uses on ground floors facing pedestrian-oriented streets and walkways.
- d) Provide a minimum 5-foot wide landscape strip to accommodate low shrubs, flowering plants, and vertical trees along all edges that do not have active commercial frontages.
- e) Integrate extensive landscaping into the parking structure edges and entries.
- f) Integrate pedestrian entries with adjacent commercial uses.
- g) Provide secondary ground floor pedestrian entries when the structure is adjacent to commercial core service alleys containing rear shop entries or paseo entries.
- h) Design parking structures to be visually compatible with other Downtown Core District commercial buildings.

Some techniques include:

- Breaking up the building mass and height to match the predominant 25-foot wide module of the core area.
- Designing the structure as a downtown building, rather than as a parking structure.



Walnut Creek

Ground floor commercial uses in the parking structure example shown above assist in maintaining retail and pedestrian continuity.



Walnut Creek

This parking structure has been designed with pilasters, and with varied facade depths, and details to relate to the module and style of nearby retail shops.



Walnut Creek

Minimize parking garage entries, and integrate parking structures with adjacent commercial uses, as shown above.

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Sacramento



Facade materials and opening proportions help relate this parking structure to its surrounding neighbors.

San Mateo



Ground level commercial uses and upper floor set-backs are techniques that relate parking structures to adjacent smaller scale development.

- Utilizing finished exterior wall materials (e.g., brick and/or stucco), and decorative trim elements.
- Providing natural light and ventilation with openings that are similar to the proportions of commercial building windows.
- Screening cars from street view.
- Visually screening interior light fixtures from street and adjacent buildings view.
- Incorporating medallions and/or decorative lighting fixtures into exterior ground floor facades.

- i) Step back street-facing facades, if feasible, where they are adjacent to lower buildings (See example to the left).
- j) Design facades facing the service drives for Downtown Core District commercial buildings as visually attractive neighbors that will be compatible with those adjacent secondary entries and outdoor use spaces. Two multi-use service alley examples are shown below.
- k) Special attention should be given to landscaping, window fenestration, lighting, variations in alley paving materials and textures, and other elements that add human scale and visual interest.

Pasadena



Pasadena



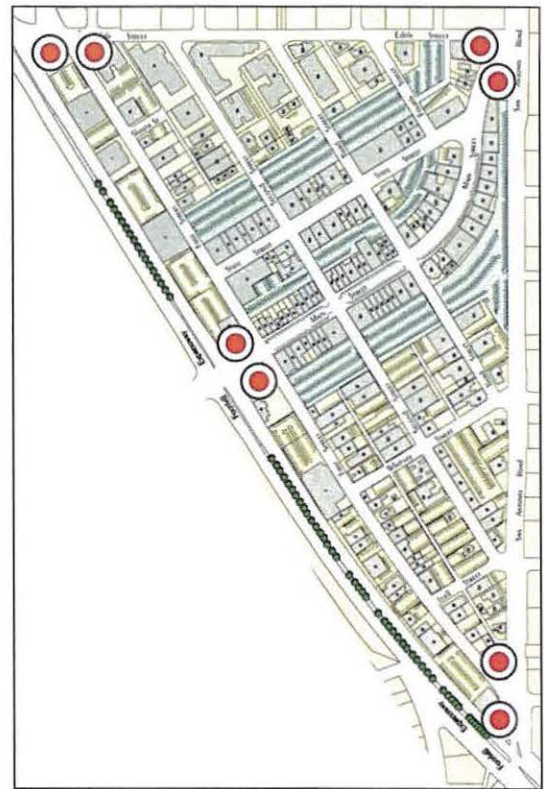
3.2.9 Reinforce a sense of entry at Downtown Gateways

a) Provide special design treatments on sites that mark entries to the Downtown Core District.

- Sites for special treatment are identified on the adjacent map.
- Relate the improvements to any special public entry improvements at these entry intersections. Broader concepts for these intersections are outlined in the *Los Altos Downtown Design Plan*.

b) Select design treatments that are appropriate for the site, the architectural style of the structure, and the uses accommodated. Some elements that may be considered include:

- Tower elements
- Sloped roof structures
- Special uses with outdoor plazas
- Fountains
- Special landscape features
- Special lighting
- Increased architectural details
- City identity signing



Downtown Gateways

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3.3 SIGNAGE

Signage is critical to the economic viability of individual businesses as well as to the downtown as a whole. This importance must be balanced with the goals of providing a strong sense of community, and using the design of signage to reinforce the village character and ambiance of Downtown Los Altos.

Applicants should refer to Chapter 11.04 Signs of the Los Altos Zoning Ordinance which contains relevant definitions and the basic standards which will be applied to commercial signage. The guidelines in this chapter supplement the Sign Ordinance, and are intended to provide more detail in regard to good signage design principles and community expectations that signage will be consistent with downtown's village scale and character.

The sign examples shown may not be appropriate for all locations. Each sign will be reviewed in the context of the proposed project architecture and site.

3.3.1 Select signs appropriate to the pedestrian scale environment of the Downtown Core District

a) **Select and scale signs that are oriented to pedestrians rather than to passing motorists. Sign types that are most likely to be successful and approved are the following:**

- Wall Signs
- Awning Signs
- Window Signs
- Projecting Signs
- Hanging Signs
- Plaque Signs

GOOD SIGN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Design easily readable signs.

- Avoid excessive wording and advertising messages. Signs are most effective when their messages can be grasped quickly. Too many words or images compete for attention and reduce the readability of the sign.

- Use no more than two letter font types per sign. The primary purpose of a sign is to quickly convey information to passing pedestrians and motorists. More than two letter styles make readability more difficult. A simple logo with an additional type style may be considered.

- Keep the size of letters and graphics in proportion to overall sign area. Text and graphics are difficult to read if they crowd the borders of the sign. Smaller letters with space around them will have more impact than larger letters with limited space around them. Generally limit the width and height of lettering and graphics to 85% of the overall sign width and height. A good rule of thumb is to limit the amount of sign information to no more than 50 to 55% of the overall sign area.

Use high quality materials

- Appropriate materials include finished wood, metal and, for projecting banner signs, woven fabric. Plastic sign materials and signs painted directly onto building surfaces are strongly discouraged..

- The sign materials and design should be related to those of the building on which it is mounted, and all sign edges should be cleanly finished.

Use simple sign shapes

- Geometrical shapes such as rectangles, squares, circles, ovals and triangles are visually stable shapes which help focus attention on the sign message. These should be used in almost all cases. Combinations of geometric shapes will also generally produce a good sign shape.



3.3.2 WALL SIGNS

Wall signs are panels or individual letters mounted on and parallel to a building wall or a roof fascia.

- a) **Limit sign information.**
 - Generally, limit sign information to the business name. Graphic logos, date of building construction, address, and other elements may be allowed at the discretion of the City.
- b) **Place signs within a clean *Signable Area*.**
 - The *Signable Area* should:
 - 1) Be relatively flat.
 - 2) Not contain doors or windows.
 - 3) Not include projecting molding or trim.
 - 4) Be in reasonable proportion to the overall facade.
 - 5) Generally not exceed 15% of the building facade.
 - If a building does not have a good location for a wall sign, use other allowed types such as awning, window, or projecting signs.
- c) **Use sign materials which project slightly from the face of the building.**
 - Signs painted directly onto wall surfaces are strongly discouraged since a change in tenant could require a major facade repainting.
 - Use either individually applied letters to the face of the wall, or apply sign letters to a board or panel mounted on the wall face. Sign copy and graphics applied to a board or panel may consist of any of the following:
 - * Individual letters and graphics of wood, metal or similar materials
 - * Individual letters and graphics carved into the surface of a wood panel
 - * Letters and graphics painted directly onto the surface of the panel
- d) **Night lighting is encouraged.**
 - Direct exterior illumination with well designed and shielded spotlights is the preferred lighting method.
 - Interior illuminated individual letters are strongly discouraged.
 - Interior illuminated *can signs* which include multiple letters on a translucent background within a single sign enclosure are not allowed.
 - Neon signs are discouraged, but may be allowed and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- e) **Conceal all sign and sign lighting raceways and other connections.**

f) Maximum letter height.

Sign height and width should be appropriate to the building on which it is placed and the distance of the sign from fronting streets. Generally, wall sign letter heights should not exceed 12 inches in height except along San Antonio Road where 18 inch high letters may be considered.

g) Relate sign colors to building colors.

- Select wall sign colors to complement the building and storefront colors. For colors other than black, select from color ranges which are analogous and complementary to storefront and/or building colors.
- Corporate branding colors will be considered, but will not be automatically approved if they are considered out of place with the building or the surrounding environment. A change of color or the use of toned down colors in the same hue family may be required in place of brighter standard corporate colors.



Santa Rosa

3.3.3 AWNING SIGNS

Awning signs consist of letters and graphics applied directly to the face or valence of awnings. Awning signs are often used effectively in combination with window signs.

a) Place signs for easy visibility.

- Apply signs to awning front valences (i.e., the flat vertical surface of awnings) or to sloped awning faces with a slope of at least 2 to 1.

b) Limit the signage information on awnings.

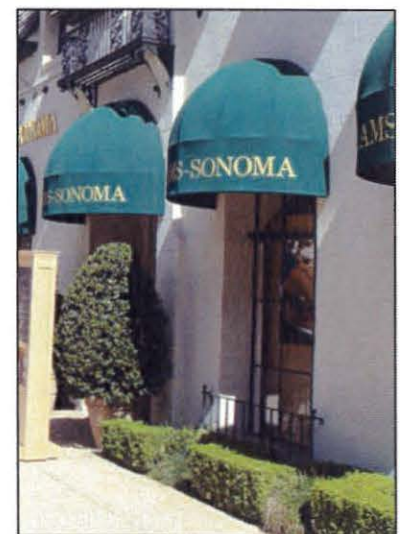
- Since awning signs will often be viewed from passing vehicles, the amount of information which can be effectively conveyed is limited. Keeping sign text short will allow viewers to better comprehend and remember the message.
- Generally, limit awning signs to the business name, business logo, services or type of business (e.g., French Cuisine), and/or the business address number.
- Limit the size of logos or text placed on awning sloped faces to a maximum of 15% of the sloped surface areas.
- Limit sign width on awning valences to a maximum of 85% of the awning width. Limit the letter height to a maximum of 85% of the valence height.



Healdsburg

c) Avoid interior illuminated awnings.

Backlit awnings that make the entire awning a large sign are not allowed. Signage on the awning's sloped face may be illuminated by shielded and attractive directional spot lights.



Pasadena

DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

Burlingame



Los Gatos



3.3.4 WINDOW SIGNS

Window signs are primarily oriented to passing pedestrians, and are generally applied to the inside of display windows.

- a) **Limit the amount of signage used.**
Window signs should be limited to a maximum of 25% of any individual window, and an aggregate area of no more than 10% of all ground floor windows on any building face.
- b) **Limit the size of lettering.**
The maximum height of letters should be 10 inches.
- c) **Consider the use of logos and creative sign type.**
Graphic logos and images along with special text formats can add personality and interest to window signs.
- d) **Use high quality materials and application methods.**
Limit window sign materials to the following:
 - Paint or vinyl film applied directly to the face of the window.
 - Wood or metal panels with applied lettering.

Oakland



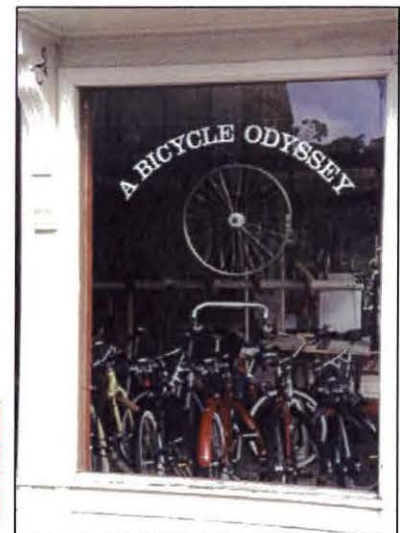
Los Gatos



Mill Valley



San Francisco

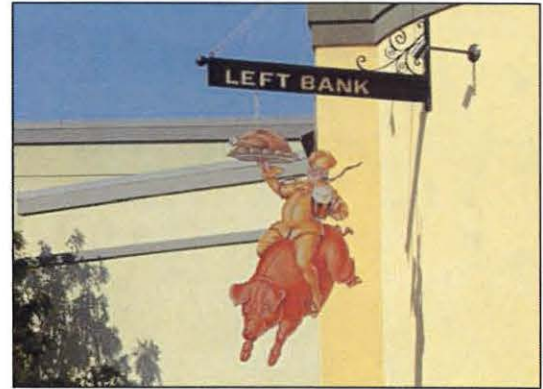


3.3.5 PROJECTING SIGNS

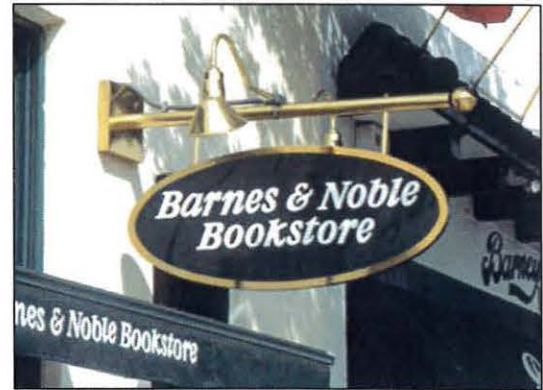
Projecting signs are relatively flat, two-sided solid panels attached to brackets which are mounted on and perpendicular to the face of buildings and storefronts. In addition to text, they may include graphic images that express the unique personality of an individual business.

- a) **Use high quality materials.**
Use wood, metal or non-glossy fabrics. Avoid plastics.
- b) **Limit the number and size of projecting signs.**
 - Use no more than one projecting sign per business frontage.
 - Limit the size of any projecting sign to five square feet.
 - Project signs no more than 36 inches from the building face, and provide at least 6 inches between the inside edge of the sign and the building.
- c) **Relate the design of projecting signs and supports to the character of the building.**
 - Simple round or square horizontal supports with capped ends, painted black or white, are generally acceptable.
 - More decorative approaches may be desirable when appropriate to the sign and/or architectural character of the building.
- d) **Position projecting signs to complement the building's architectural details.**

Locate solid panel signs below the first floor ceiling line, or no more than 14 feet above the sidewalk, whichever is less. Provide at least 8 feet from the bottom of projecting signs to the ground in pedestrian areas.
- e) **Provide sign lighting only with shielded spotlights.**
 - Utilize high quality fixtures such as cylinder spots or decorative fixtures. Avoid exposed standard spot and flood light bulbs.
 - Design light supports to complement the design of the sign and building facade.



Pleasant Hill



Oakland



Santa Barbara



San Francisco

Blade signs are a smaller form of projecting sign.



Los Gatos

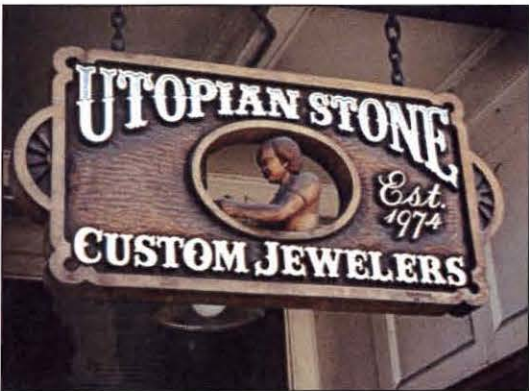
DOWNTOWN CORE DISTRICT

3

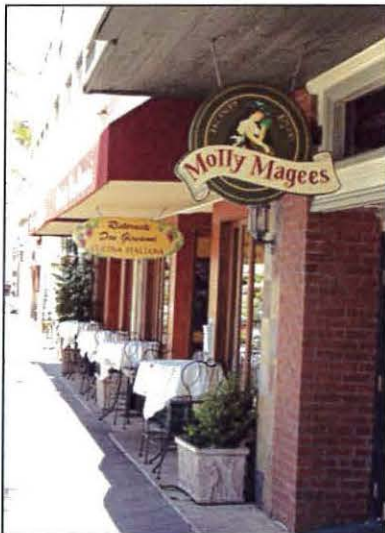
Laguna Beach



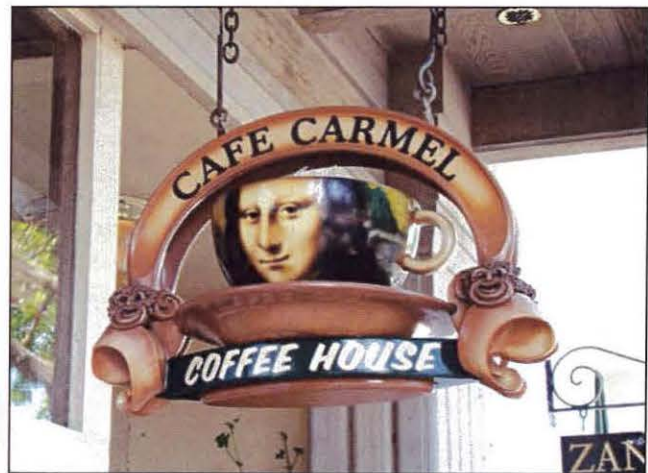
Laguna Beach



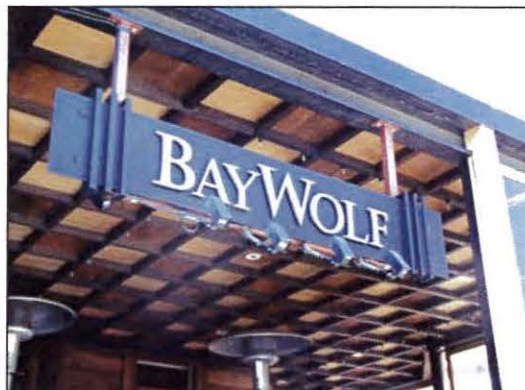
Mountain View



Carmel



Oakland



3.3.6 HANGING SIGNS

Hanging signs are relatively flat panels, generally two-sided, which are similar to projecting signs, but are smaller and suspended below awnings, bay windows, balconies, and similar projections. They are intended primarily for business identification to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk.

- a) **Use high quality materials.**
Use wood or metal and avoid shiny plastic or fabric. Finish all exposed edges. Suspend signs with metal rods, small scale chain, cable, or hooks.
- b) **Limit the number and size of hanging signs.**
Use no more than one hanging sign per business. Limit the maximum sign size to 3 square feet. Mount signs to provide a minimum of 8 feet clearance between the sign and the sidewalk.
- c) **Orient hanging signs to pedestrian traffic.**
Mount signs under awnings, bay windows or other projections with their orientation perpendicular to the building face so that they will be visible to pedestrians passing on the sidewalk. If hanging signs for multiple businesses are placed along a building frontage, they should all be mounted with their bottom edge the same distance above the sidewalk.

3.3.7 PLAQUE SIGNS

Plaque signs are pedestrian-oriented flat panels mounted to wall surfaces near business entries, upper floor entries, and courtyards. They include signs that identify a specific business, directory signs for multiple businesses, and menu display boxes for restaurants.

- a) **Limit the location and size of plaque signs.**
Locate signs only on wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entries or entry passageways to off-street courtyards. Plaque signs may identify a single business or multiple businesses occupying an upper floor or courtyard.



Santa Barbara



Los Gatos



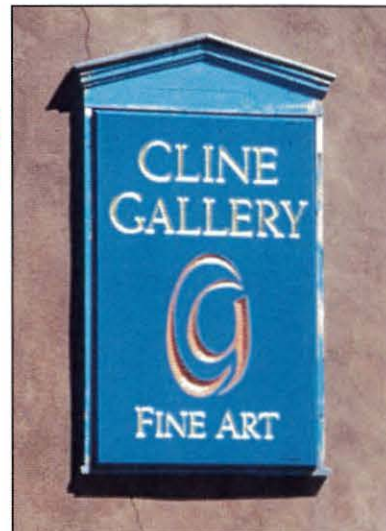
Santa Barbara

- b) **Use plaque signs for the display of restaurant menus.**

A restaurant district is enhanced when a variety of restaurants share the area and customers are able to walk from one to the next to compare menus and prices. Attractive menu boxes with lighting assist in this process. Menu signs or boxes should have internal indirect lighting (e.g., bulbs located in the frame to cast direct light over the menu surface) or direct lighting using decorative fixtures.



Sausalito



Santa Fe



San Francisco

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MIXED COMMERCIAL
DISTRICT

4



MIXED COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Owners of properties and businesses in this district should review the guidelines for the Downtown Core District. While projects in this district may be somewhat larger and less retail-oriented than those in the downtown core, they are still very much a part of the downtown village, and the village character and scale emphasis underlying those guidelines will be expected of new buildings and changes to existing properties in this district. The intent of these guidelines and the zoning standards established for this district are summarized in the sidebar to the right.

The primary differences between development in this district and the downtown core include:

- A wider range of uses is allowed.
- Required parking must be provided on-site rather than in common parking district lots or structures.
- Setbacks are required along all street fronts, and in many cases at the rear of parcels.
- A 50-foot building module applies, rather than the 25-foot module in the downtown core.
- Three-story buildings are allowed up to forty-five feet in height.*

** Pending a Zoning Code change approval by the City Council to increase the height limit in this zone from its current maximum of forty feet.*

INTENT

- A. Promote the implementation of the Los Altos Downtown Design Plan.
- B. Support and enhance the downtown Los Altos village atmosphere.
- C. Allow latitude for creative design and architectural variety.
- D. Respect the scale and character of the area immediately surrounding the existing downtown pedestrian district.
- E. Provide pedestrian amenities such as paseos, outdoor public spaces and outdoor seating.
- F. Establish a sense of entry into the downtown.
- G. Encourage historic preservation for those buildings listed on the city's historic resources inventory.
- H. Encourage the upgrading of building exteriors, signs, passageways and rear entries.
- I. Provide for a full range of retail, office, and service uses appropriate to downtown.
- J. Improve the visual appeal and pedestrian orientation of the downtown.
- K. Encourage the use of solar, photo voltaic, and other energy conserving devices.

MIXED COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

4

Los Altos



This low wall separates the parking lot from the sidewalk/driveway at this Los Altos office building.

Palo Alto



A low box hedge is used here to buffer the pedestrian from the adjacent parking lot.

Palo Alto



Special paving and landscaping give this parking lot a village character.

4.1 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

A strong pedestrian orientation is expected. In addition to the guidelines below, the Downtown Core District Pedestrian Environment guidelines on pages 17-22 will also apply to this district.

4.1.1 Minimize the impact of parking on pedestrian circulation and the pedestrian environment

- a) Underground parking is strongly encouraged.
- b) Locate parking at the rear of parcels.
- c) Limit the exposure of surface parking lots along street frontages as much as possible.
- d) Provide access to parking from passages and less traveled pedestrian routes whenever possible.
- e) Limit the width of parking access drives as much as possible.
- f) Limit access and parking lot paving to those areas that are functionally required, and provide landscaping in all other areas.
- g) Where parking lots must abut a public street or a pedestrian walkway, provide a minimum landscaped setback of 5 feet, and provide low walls or box hedges to screen parked cars from direct view. Two examples of screening are shown to the left.
- h) Special textured paving that is porous and minimizes water run-off in surface parking lots is strongly encouraged. Examples are shown to the left and below.

Palo Alto



Another example of porous paving

4.2 ARCHITECTURE

The Mixed Commercial District includes office and service uses as well as retail uses. And, since many of the parcels are larger than those in the Downtown Core District, buildings are also often larger. The architecture guidelines below are intended to recognize these differences while maintaining a scale and character that is compatible with that of the downtown core.

4.2.1 Mixed use buildings are encouraged

- a) **Buildings not planning for a mixed use at the current time still must allow for future mixed use by:**
 - Providing a minimum ground floor ceiling height of 12 feet.
 - Locating the ground floor no more than 12 inches above the sidewalk level.
 - Designing the ground floor facade with a minimum of 60 percent transparent glazing.
- b) **Ground floor retail uses should generally follow the relevant storefront design guidelines for the Downtown Core District. If in doubt, applicant should consult with city planning staff.**

4.2.2 Break long facades into smaller modules

- a) **Buildings that are longer than 75 feet in length must be broken up into segments that are no longer than 50 feet.**
- b) **The development of smaller building segments may be accomplished in several different ways. They include combinations of the following techniques:**
 - Separate structures surrounding a courtyard.
 - Indented courtyards (See Guideline 3.2.1.b).
 - A change in horizontal or vertical plane.
 - A projection or recess.
 - Varying cornice or roof lines.
 - Distinctive entries.

4.2.3 Provide primary building entries on the street frontage

- a) **Building entries may also be provided from the parking lot, but this should not be designed as the only or the major entry.**



Los Altos



Danville

The photos above show two examples of breaking larger buildings into smaller segments that are compatible with the Los Altos downtown village scale and character.

MIXED COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

4

BUILDING HEIGHT VARIATION EXAMPLES

4.2.4 A variation in building heights is encouraged

- a) Variations may be provided by different heights for major building elements or by lowering segments of the facade such as exterior stairs (See photos to the left).

4.2.5 Sloped roof forms are encouraged

- a) Flat roofs may be considered on First Street parcels where they would be more compatible to adjacent development.

- b) Upper floors embedded in the sloped roof form may be needed to conform to the height limits for the district.

One example is shown below.

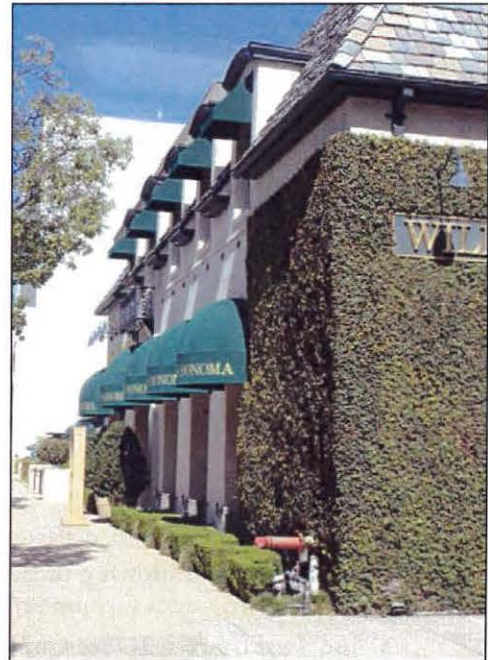


Los Gatos



Santa Monica

Exterior stairs to upper floor uses are one way to provide variation in building height.



Pasadena

4.2.6 Design buildings to screen surface parking lots whenever possible

- a) Provide as much building frontage along the streets as possible.
- b) Second floor space is encouraged along street frontages with parking lot entries. See the example below.



Capertino

Projecting ground floor arcades are another way to provide variation in building height.



Santa Monica

4.2.7 Provide design consistency

- a) The architectural style and details should continue around all sides of the structure.

4.2.8 Emphasize individual windows or small window groups on upper levels

- a) Use vertical window proportions.
- b) Avoid horizontal ribbon windows.
- c) Recess window a minimum of 3 inches from the face of all exterior walls.

4.2.9 Upper floor balconies and decks are encouraged



Los Gatos

Another example of second floor balcony and deck space providing facade depth and visual interest.

See the guidelines and examples on pages 34-35.

4.2.10 Include substantial architectural detail

- a) Detail elements should be consistent with the architectural style of the building.
- b) Detail elements, similar to those in the Downtown Core, may include:
 - Roof cornices and overhangs
 - Wall mouldings
 - Trellises and lattices with landscaping
 - Decorative lights
 - Awnings
 - Balconies

See examples to the right.



Sunnyvale

Avoid continuous ribbon windows like those above in favor of individual windows with substantial jambs separating them, as shown below.



Los Altos



Los Gatos



Pasadena

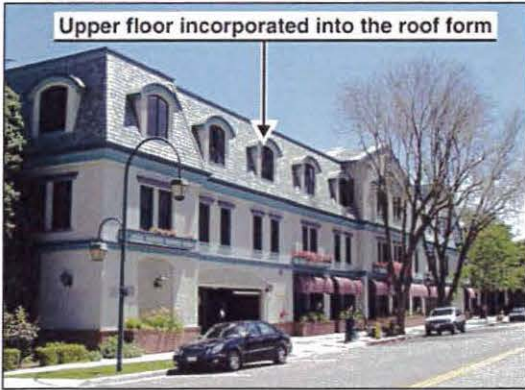
MIXED COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

4

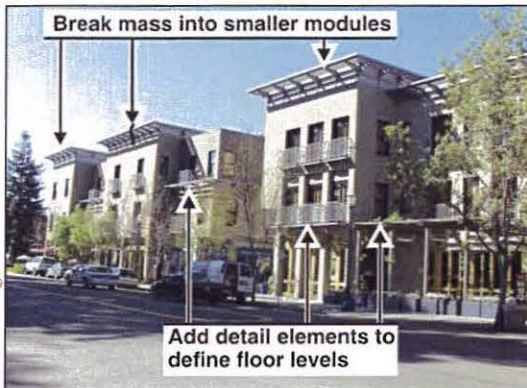
4.2.11 Design taller buildings to relate to smaller nearby buildings in the downtown

Some techniques are shown in the examples on this page.

Dannville



Healdsburg



Birkdale Village



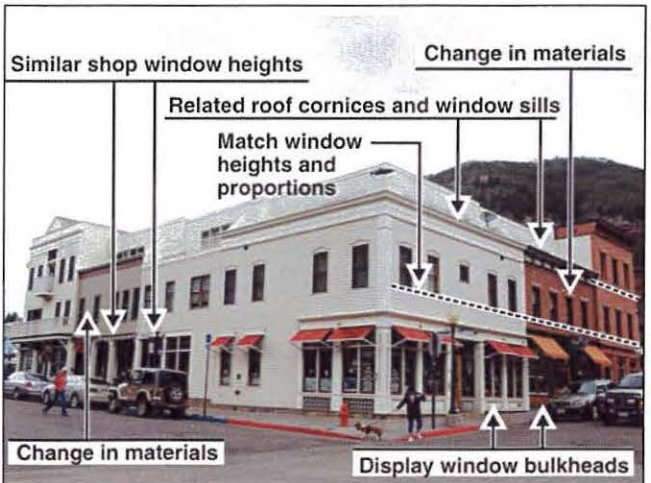
Telluride



Santa Barbara



Telluride



4.3 LANDSCAPE

Extensive landscaping is expected in the Mixed Commercial District because of the increased setback requirements, substantial surface parking, and the increased size of the buildings.

4.3.1 Provide a landscaping buffer between parking lots and building facades

- a) **Include shrub and tree landscaping to give tenants a sense of separation between themselves and the parking lot.**
- b) **When parking is tucked under the building, landscaped planters, with trees, should be provided to break up the parking lot paving at the building. One example is shown below to the right.**

4.3.2 Provide special landscaping and paving at building entries

See pages 28 and 29.

4.3.3 Provide on-site amenities for tenants and pedestrians

- a) **Locate amenities adjacent to sidewalks, building entries, paseos, and courtyards.** Amenities may include:
 - Benches
 - Fountains
 - Planted areas
 - Rain gardens and other rainwater infiltration features
 - Special decorative paving
 - Potted flowers and plants
 - Public art
 - Waste receptacles



Danville

Landscaping to separate buildings from parking lots is expected. The type and height of landscaping will be dependant on the size, height, and form of the building.



Leguna Beach

Example of landscaped planters at tuck-under parking.



Los Altos

Los Altos example of landscaping used to enhance an office building's setting.

4

GROUND SIGN EXAMPLES



Los Altos



Sonoma



Sonoma

4.4 SIGNAGE

The Downtown Core District signage guidelines apply to all signs in the Mixed Commercial District. Ground signs and free-standing signs may also be allowed at the discretion of the city.

4.4.1 GROUND SIGNS

a) Location limitations.

Ground signs may be considered on a case-by-case basis mainly along San Antonio Road in recognition of its greater vehicle orientation, width, and traffic speeds. They may also be considered along other streets where wide landscaped setbacks are provided, as in the downtown Los Altos example to the upper left.

b) Limit the information on each sign.

• Ground signs should generally be limited to the following information:

- 1) Project or primary business identification name and/or logo
- 2) Address number

• Multi-tenant ground signs are strongly discouraged. However, the display of multiple tenants may be considered for small ground signs so long as the sign and background color is common throughout, and the type style and logo colors of each tenant are the same.

• The inclusion of services and products offered should not be included on ground signs.

c) Locate signs for easy visibility from passing vehicles.

- Locate signs within 10 feet of the front property line.
- Avoid blocking any vehicular or pedestrian sight lines which might result in safety problems.

d) Signs including bases should fit within a rectangle no larger than 5 feet high and 5 feet wide.

e) Lighting.

• Lighting for ground signs must be by direct spotlight illumination from fixtures mounted either at the top of the sign or on the ground below the sign. Fixtures must be shielded to avoid direct view of the bulbs. Interior illuminated ground signs are not allowed.

f) Materials.

• All ground signs, including price signs for service stations, shall be constructed of matte finish nonreflective materials.

4.4.2 FREESTANDING SIGNS

- a) Limit freestanding signs to single tenants.
- b) Signs including bases, vertical supports, and crossbars should fit within a rectangle no larger than 6 feet high and 3 feet wide.
- c) All sign materials should be matte finish.
- d) Letters and logos may be applied or painted onto the sign.
- e) Signs may be externally lit with shielded spot lights.

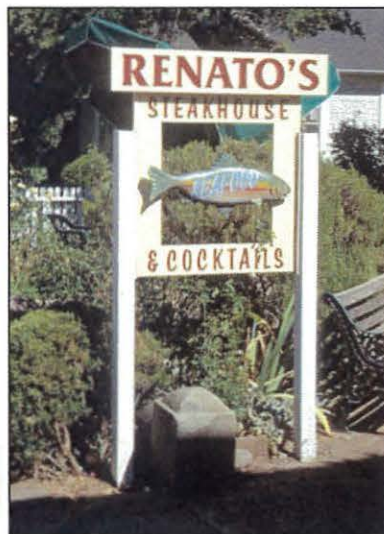
FREESTANDING SIGN EXAMPLES



Laguna Beach



Benicia

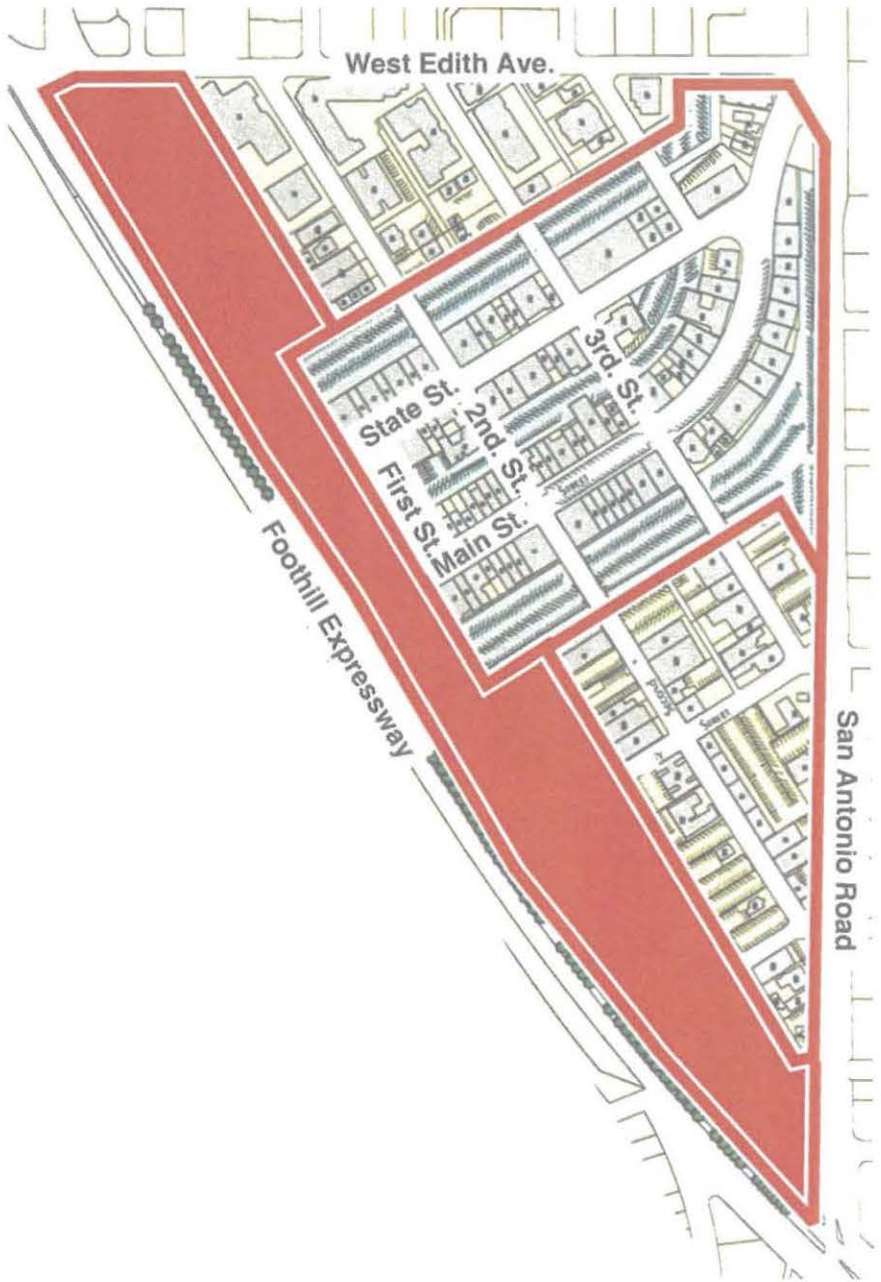


Sonoma

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**FIRST STREET
DISTRICT**

5



FIRST STREET DISTRICT

Owners of properties and businesses in this district should review the guidelines for the Downtown Core District. While projects in this district may be somewhat larger and less retail-oriented than those in the downtown core, they are still very much a part of the downtown village, and the village character and scale emphasis underlying those guidelines will be expected of new buildings and changes to existing properties in this district. The intent of these guidelines and the zoning standards established for this district are summarized in the sidebar to the right.

The primary differences between development in this district and the downtown core include:

- A wider range of uses is allowed.
- Required parking must be provided on-site rather than in common parking district lots or structures.
- Setbacks are required along all street fronts, and in many cases at the rear of parcels.
- A 50-foot building module applies, rather than the 25-foot module in the downtown core, except for lots located within the CRS Zoning District.*

** Pending a Zoning Code change approval by the City Council to extend the CRS zoning into the First Street District..*

INTENT

- A. Promote the implementation of the Los Altos Downtown Design Plan.
- B. Support and enhance the downtown Los Altos village atmosphere.
- C. Allow latitude for creative design and architectural variety.
- D. Respect the scale and character of the area immediately surrounding the existing downtown pedestrian district.
- E. Establish a sense of entry into the downtown.
- F. Encourage historic preservation for those buildings listed on the city's historic resources inventory.
- G. Encourage the upgrading of building exteriors, signs, and parking lots.
- H. Provide for a full range of retail, office, and service uses appropriate to downtown.
- I. Develop a landscaped strip along the back of properties that abut Foothill Expressway between West Edith Avenue and San Antonio Road.
- J. Improve the visual appeal and pedestrian orientation of the downtown.
- K. Encourage the use of solar, photo voltaic, and other energy conserving devices.

Applicants should carefully review the Los Altos Zoning Ordinance provisions appropriate to their properties. Parcels covered by the design guidelines for the First Street District are located within three zoning districts with slightly different limitations and requirements.

5



Santa Rosa

A visual and physical separation between street front sidewalks and adjacent parking lots is expected.

5.1 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The First Street District is spread along First Street which is more vehicle-oriented than the remainder of Downtown Los Altos, and has more surface parking with limited landscaping than most other areas. Nevertheless, this district is very much a part of the downtown village. These guidelines are intended to allow larger buildings and on-site parking while doing so in a manner that reinforces Downtown Los Altos' village scale and character.

5.1.1 Minimize the visual impact of parking

- a) Underground or screened roof parking is encouraged on larger parcels.
- b) Provide a landscape buffer between street front sidewalks and any adjacent parking lot. Per the zoning code, the minimum width of this buffer must be 5 feet, unless less is allowed by a variance. When lesser widths are allowed for existing parking lot improvements, some buffering is still required. One approach to adding visual buffering by a low wall is shown below.



Benicia

5.1.2 Provide pedestrian linkages between street front sidewalks and building entries

- a) Building entries facing First Street are strongly encouraged. For larger buildings where entries are set back on a facade facing a parking lot, provide a strong sidewalk connection with landscaping on both sides from the street front to the entry.

5.1.3 Provide landscape buffers between parking lots and pedestrian areas at buildings

- a) Building fronts are expected to be as active and attractive as those in the Downtown Core District, and to be buffered from parked cars. Landscaping and, where appropriate, trees should be used to buffer pedestrian areas. Alternatively, arcades and planters at the building may be used for this purpose. Examples of these two approaches are shown to the left.



Danville

Separate parking lots from pedestrian areas at buildings by landscaping (above) or by pedestrian arcades (below).



Los Gatos

5.1.4 Provide special paving for parking lots immediately accessible from the street

a) Parking areas which are adjacent to street front sidewalks and with perpendicular parking spaces directly accessible from the street drive lane are strongly discouraged. For existing parking areas like this that are being upgraded, provide a distinction on the paving color and texture between the parking surface and the adjacent sidewalk and street paving.

5.1.5 Provide pedestrian walkways through large parking lots

a) Dedicated walks through parking lots will improve pedestrian safety and enhance the shopping and business patronage experience. Walkways should be reinforced with edge landscaping and with textured and/or permeable paving where they cross parking drive aisles. One example is shown in the upper right of this page.

5.1.6 Provide pedestrian amenities.

Amenities may include:

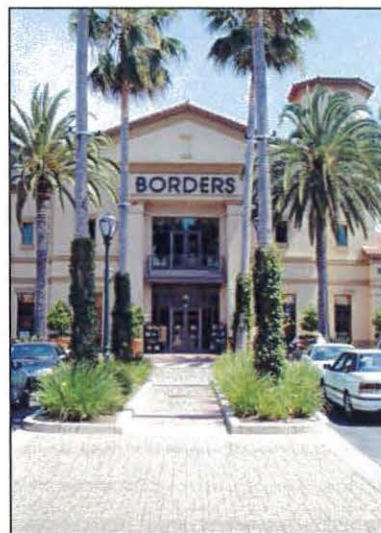
- Benches
- Fountains
- Planted areas
- Rain gardens and other rainwater infiltration features
- Special decorative paving
- Potted flowers and plants
- Public art
- Waste receptacles

5.1.7 Integrate ground floor residential uses with the streetscape

a) Set structures back a minimum of 10 feet from the street property line. Stairs and entry porches may encroach into this setback up to the property line.

B) Soft landscaping is required for a minimum of 60% of the front setback area.

See examples below and to the right.



Sunnyvale

Example of a well designed pedestrian walkway through a parking lot. Note: The building entry in the background would be out of scale for downtown Los Altos.



Sunnyvale

Provide pedestrian amenities.



Mountain View



Mountain View

Provide ground floor residential setback landscaping.

FIRST STREET DISTRICT

5



Justin

This shopping complex has a village scale and character by virtue of treating adjacent uses as individual buildings.



Los Gatos

The scale, details and natural materials used for this tower create an attractive focal point for the building without losing human scale.

5.2 ARCHITECTURE

Building uses and sizes will vary more in the First Street District than elsewhere in the downtown. The goal of these guidelines is to accommodate this wide diversity of size and use while maintaining a village scale and character that is complementary to the downtown core. The photographs shown on this and the following page are examples of more vehicle-oriented buildings that include forms and details that are sensitive to village scale and character.

5.2.1 Design to a village scale and character

- a) Avoid large box-like structures.
- b) Break larger buildings into smaller scale elements.
- c) Provide special design articulation and detail for building facades located adjacent to street frontages.
- d) Keep focal point elements small in scale.
- e) Utilize materials that are common in the downtown core.
- f) Avoid designs that appear to seek to be prominently seen from Foothill Expressway and/or San Antonio Road in favor of designs that focus on First Street, and are a part of the village environment.
- g) Provide substantial small scale details.
- h) Integrate landscaping into building facades in a manner similar to the Downtown Core District (See pages 28-29).

Examples of larger parcel buildings that are designed to be consistent with a village character are shown on this and the adjacent page.



Mill Valley

Traditional building forms, architectural details, and integrated landscaping assist in relating the parking lot frontage to an overall village scale and character.

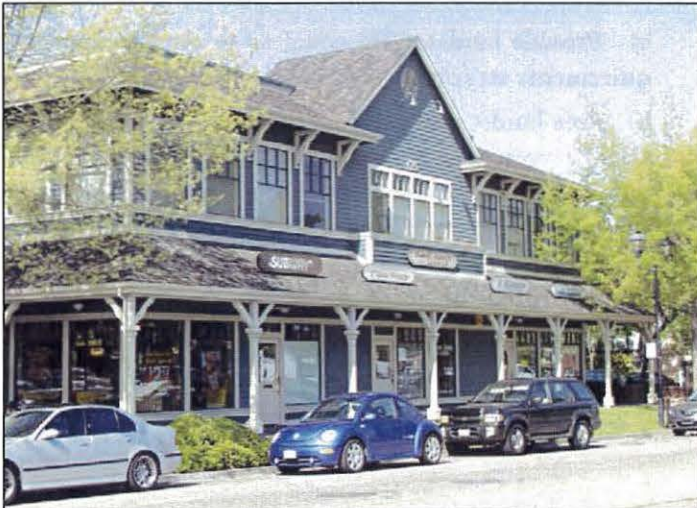
5.2.2 Design structures to be compatible with adjacent existing buildings

- a) Buildings adjacent to the Downtown Core District should be designed in form, material, and details similar to those nearby along Main and State Streets.
- b) Projects adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods should draw upon residential forms and details to create a smaller grain design fabric that is compatible with the residential buildings.

Examples are shown below and to the right.



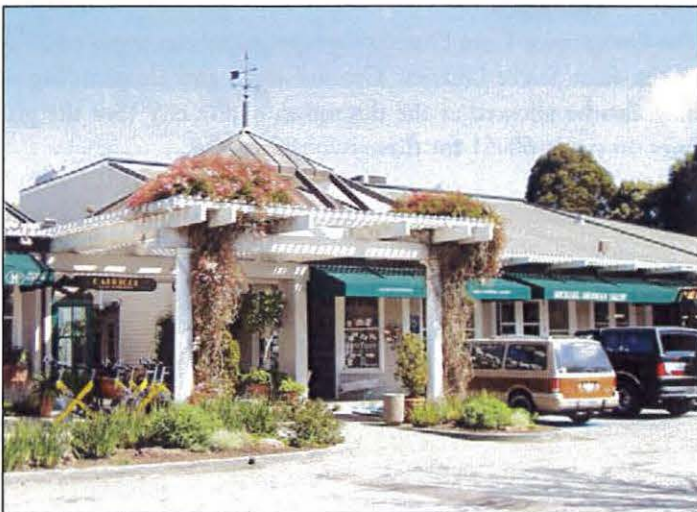
Ojai



Danville



Danville



Mill Valley



Santa Rosa

Landscaping between facing parking rows is desirable to break up large expanses of paving.

5.3 LANDSCAPE

Substantial landscaping is expected in the First Street District to ensure that the area becomes a visual part of the larger downtown village.

5.3.1 Provide substantial landscaping adjacent to residential neighborhoods

5.3.2 Landscape Foothill Expressway edges with shrubbery and trees

5.3.3 Add substantial landscaping in all parking lots

- a) Provide landscaping equal to or greater than the requirements set forth in the Los Altos Zoning Code.
- b) Tree landscaping should be provided to create an orchard canopy effect in surface parking lots with more than one drive aisle. Utilize landscape fingers placed parallel to the parking spaces to break up expanses of parking lot paving. Space the islands with intervals not exceeding 6 parking spaces in length.
- c) Utilize hedges, trees, and other landscaping between facing parking spaces as shown in the example to the left.

5.3.4 Add street trees along all parcel street frontages

5.4 SIGNAGE

The Downtown Core District signage guidelines apply to all signs in the First Street District. Ground signs and freestanding signs may also be allowed at the discretion of the city (See the guidelines on pages 60-61 for these two sign types).



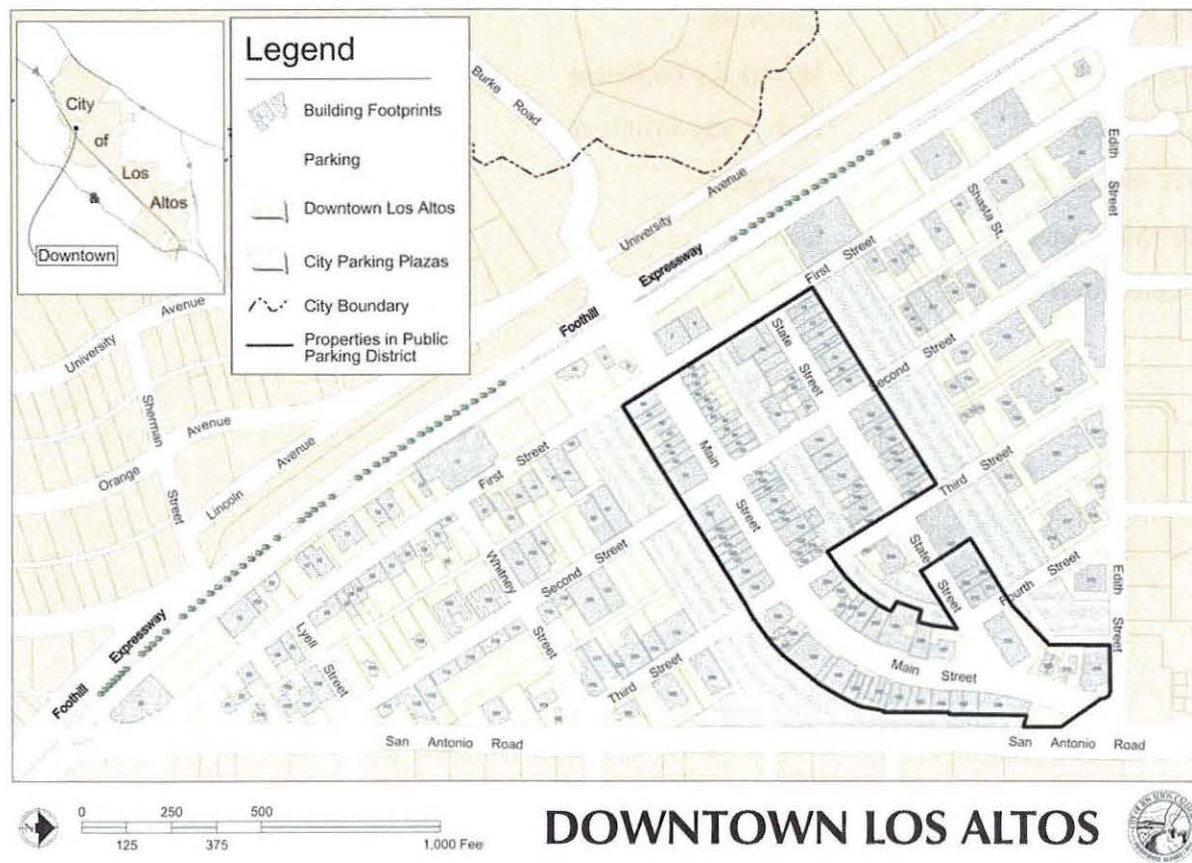
APPENDICES



DOWNTOWN PARKING DISTRICT

In conjunction with downtown property owners in 1956 the City of Los Altos formed a public parking assessment district. As a result this district formed the 10 public parking plazas in the downtown core area. A majority of the properties in the downtown core are within the public parking district as shown on the map below. These properties in the public parking district are subject to unique parking regulations that exempt the properties from providing on-site parking for gross square footage that does not exceed 100 percent of their lot area.

Properties in Public Parking District



DOWNTOWN HISTORIC RESOURCES

Downtown Los Altos has nine properties listed in the City’s Historic Resources Inventory, including five buildings that are designated as landmarks. The most prominent historic building downtown is the old Southern Pacific Railroad Station at 288 First Street, which was designated as a landmark in 1984 and may be eligible for listing on the State and National Historic Registers. All nine properties and their historic ranking is listed below. More detailed historic evaluations for each property are available in the City’s Historic Resources Inventory.

Address	Historic Ranking
288 First Street	Landmark
300 Main Street	Landmark
301 Main Street	Historically Significant
316 Main Street	Landmark
350 Main Street	Historically Important
368 Main Street	Historically Significant
388-398 Main Street	Landmark
395-399 Main Street	Landmark
188 Second Street	Historically Significant