DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE LAKE MERRITT STATION AREA PLAN

LIST OF FIGURES

1 Introduction

Intent

The Design Guidelines for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan complement the existing zoning regulations, citywide design guidelines, and the design review procedures of the Oakland Planning Code. The Lake Merritt Design Guidelines provide certainty and predictability in the design review process through establishment of uniform decision-making criteria for all projects in the Lake Merritt Station Planning Area. These Design Guidelines, in combination with any other applicable citywide guidelines, serve as the basis for design review approval findings by City staff, and when necessary, the City Planning Commission and the City Council. It is intended to be specific enough to guide development, but also to be flexible and qualitative enough to encourage creative design solutions.

The Design Guidelines in this document, in combination with other guidelines, land use designations, and circulation improvements outlined in the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan, will together shape the future of the Planning Area and aim to meet the vision and goals of the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan.

Applicability

Chapter 17.136 of the Planning Code determines the type of design review required for different projects. These Lake Merritt guidelines supplement the design review criteria contained in that Chapter and any other required criteria.

In general, all applicable guidelines should be met to approve a proposal. However, this document is not intended to restrict innovation, imagination and variety in design. A method that achieves associated principals to the same extent as a guideline may be considered in lieu of that guideline.

Related Design Guidelines

Other design guidelines that projects in the Planning Area should consider:

- For small projects limited to minor changes to existing commercial, civic, or industrial facilities, and the nonresidential portions of mixed use development projects, see the City of Oakland Small Project Design Guidelines.
- All projects should review the surveys included in the City of Oakland's Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Security Handbook. Several guidelines reflect the concepts of CPTED, but all projects should review the full survey to ensure design incorporates elements that promote public safety.
- For Residential Facilities with one or two primary dwelling units, or the residential portions of Mixed Use Development projects with one or two primary dwelling units, please see the City of Oakland Small Project Design Review Checklist Criteria for facilities with 1-2 Primary Dwelling Units, and the City of Oakland Interim Design Review Manual for One-and Two-Unit Residences.
- Note that additional guidelines that are adopted may also apply to projects in the Planning Area.

Design Guidelines

The quality and character of the public realm is a critical component of how a place is used and experienced. In the Planning Area, the public realm is shaped by buildings, streetscape, open spaces, and the spaces in between, all of which contribute to the Planning Area's identity. This chapter provides guidance for new building development and enhancing the public realm to further reinforce and shape the identity of the Planning Area.

2 Existing Building Character

Block Sizes and Parcels

The majority of roadways in the Planning Area are designed in a typical grid system with blocks that measure 1.6 acres in size. The major exception to this pattern is in the Peralta/Laney College Plan District and where institutional uses exist along 10th Street between Oak Street and 4th Avenue, where the block sizes are much larger.

Predominant

Blocks are generally 220 feet on the north-south face and 320 feet on the east-west face. Buildings line the sidewalk edge. Parking is generally at the interior of the block or in parking structures, though there are a few surface parking lots. The grid system was laid out in the early 1850s, and blocks have been preserved. Parcel sizes are relatively small in Chinatown, along 14th Street, and in the Eastlake Gateway. This small lot size creates a pedestrian-scale feeling and adds variety to the street.

Larger Parcels

Parcels are larger for some government buildings and public facilities, including: the post office, the public library, the County offices, the County court, and schools. One of the very few street closures that merged the blocks was on 10th Street between Webster and Broadway, where several large buildings were built, including the Pacific Renaissance Plaza, the Oakland Marriot Hotel, and the Trans Pacific Centre. Another example is on Alice Street (between 10th and 11th Streets) that connect Lincoln Recreation Center with Lincoln Elementary. In this example clear pedestrian and bicycle through access was preserved.

Mega-Block

The Peralta/Laney College Plan District is largely made up of megablocks that break up the street pattern, in part because they line the Lake Merritt Channel, but also because they are built across what would be several city blocks. Buildings in this area are set back from the street and often do not face the street. The mega-blocks include:

- Laney College. The main campus, which includes the 14 buildings, is roughly 740 feet by 720 feet, about 12 acres, plus about three acres of recreational space including tennis courts and an art building. Most of the buildings are one to two stories, with the exception of the administration building, which is eight stories high.
- Laney Parking. The Laney parking lot is about five and one quarter acres, and is currently used as parking for Laney students, staff, and faculty. The site covers the area between Fallon Street, 7th Street, the Channel and the I-880 freeway.
- Laney College Sports Fields. The Fields cover 8.7 acres, and are used primarily by Laney College students and athletes.

Ground floor conditions vary throughout the Planning Area.

Existing eight story building (top) and twelve story building (bottom). Some of the tallest buildings in the Planning Area are near Broadway, the core of Downtown.

- Peralta Community College District Administration. The district administration site is nearly seven acres. The administration building is one story and set back from the street. The site covers the area between 5th Avenue, 7th Street, the Channel and the I-880 freeway.
- Oakland Museum of California. The Oakland Museum covers about six acres. The building is one to two stories and much of the ground floor of the museum is slightly below grade.
- Kaiser Convention Center. The Kaiser Convention Center and parking lot, located adjacent to the Oakland Museum of California, covers about four acres. The building measures approximately four hundred feet long by two hundred feet across and contains approximately 228,000 square feet of floor area on four levels, including a basement.
- Oakland Unified School District Downtown Educational Complex (DEC). The 123,000 square foot complex is located on 5.6 acres, closing 3rd Avenue between East 10th Street and East 11th Street, and East 11th Street between 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue.

Historic Resources

Several historic districts and properties exist throughout the Planning Area, adding a special character and direct connection with the evolution of the community and the urban setting. Careful design and planning of new transit-oriented development is necessary to be compatible with these historic resources. There are also opportunities for design solutions that marry transit-oriented development with the preservation or reuse of multiple historic resources in the Planning Area, since opportunity sites identified in the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan may be adjacent to historic resources.

Building Setbacks and Development Standards

Most of the buildings in the Planning Area are built at or close to the sidewalk edge. In the Chinatown Commercial area, businesses activate the street edge and create a dynamic pedestrian experience. However many other areas lack this vibrancy, particularly in the mega-block areas where buildings do not relate to the street. In some residential areas of Chinatown, many houses are set back from the sidewalk about five to ten feet to create a transition between public and private space. This setback area is usually paved, though some houses have landscaped setbacks.

Ground Floor Conditions

Ground floor conditions vary throughout the Planning Area, impacting the way that buildings relate to the street in different areas. In the Chinatown Commercial center, ground floor building heights are generally around 10 to 12 feet. The ground floor generally comprise smaller pedestrian-scaled storefronts, with large windows on the street façade. Markets are largely open to the street with open doors and windows, and sometimes entire storefronts are open and visible to the inside. Building materials vary from wood and stucco to concrete and brick.

These smaller scaled storefronts are reflective of the type of businesses that exist in the Chinatown Commercial center that create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Smaller storefronts provide space for neighborhood-serving retail while also providing high levels of pedestrian interest and activity.

This is in contrast to the character of building façades of large institutional buildings, such as the Oakland Museum of California, the Kaiser Convention Center, and the ABAG/ MTC building. These buildings have very few openings to the street and few to no windows on the street at pedestrian level, creating a wall to the sidewalk. These buildings generally have concrete or brick façades. However, landscaping surrounding these institutional buildings positively affects their character and relationship to the street.

Building Design Character

Building design varies throughout the Planning Area, both in terms of scale and in building architecture. Building heights range from one and two stories, to up to 24 stories. Architectural styles are also varied, including Asian historic design, Queen Anne or other Victorian historic residential design, modern design, and large-scale institutional design. The varied architecture of the existing area reflects the diverse range of uses in the Planning Area. When complemented with consistency in public realm features and pedestrian amenities, diverse architectural design adds visual interest and helps establish neighborhood character. The following photos illustrate the range of building design character.

Existing four-story office building (top) and two story commercial (middle) and residential buildings (bottom).

Existing historic residential buildings include Victorian (top), Federal (middle), and Neo-Renaissance (bottom) styles. Note that some houses have paved setbacks, while others include landscaping (top).

Commercial and institutional design includes Neo-Classical and WPA Moderne influences (top), Art Deco (middle), and historic commercial spaces renovated for live/work (bottom).

New modern residential buildings (top and middle) and institutional buildings (bottom) have added more design diversity to the Planning Area.

3 Building Design Guidelines

Site Planning and Building Orientation

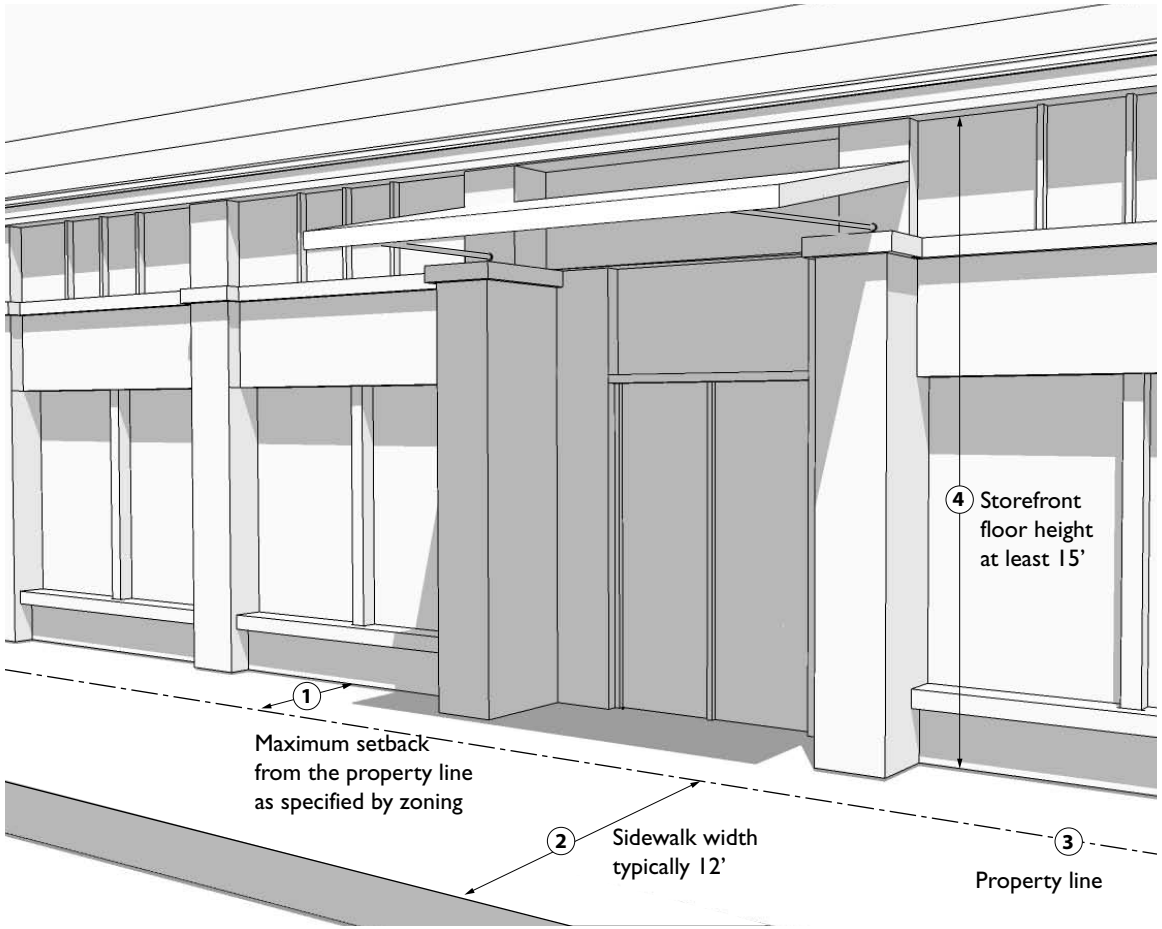
Site planning and building orientation have a significant impact on the urban environment, and can help shape a vibrant and pedestrian oriented neighborhood.

DG-1 **Public Perception.** Consider the three-dimensionality of buildings: how they are perceived from the ground level, public streets, and public open spaces; and how they can contribute to or diminish neighborhood or district character, views, and/or overall quality of life.

DG-2 **Streetfront Location.** Spatially define the streetfront by locating storefronts near the property lines facing the street and adjacent to one another. Build the ground level of commercial buildings near sidewalks and close to side property lines, as shown in Figure 1. A consistent series of commercial buildings constructed at the sidewalk and adjacent to one another creates a street wall and a defined pedestrian space. Each zoning district has a maximum setback limit to create or maintain this storefront pattern.

DG-3 **Building Location.** Locate buildings to enhance public/private interface and improve pedestrian comfort and safety. Where applicable — such as where setbacks would not detract from continuous retail frontage — locate mixed-use, commercial and/or multifamily residential buildings back from the property line in order to enhance the pedestrian experience and enlarge the sidewalk through provision of public parks, plazas, courtyards or outdoor dining. Other appropriate variations include inset bays for entrances and special corner features.

Figure 1: BUILDING LOCATION



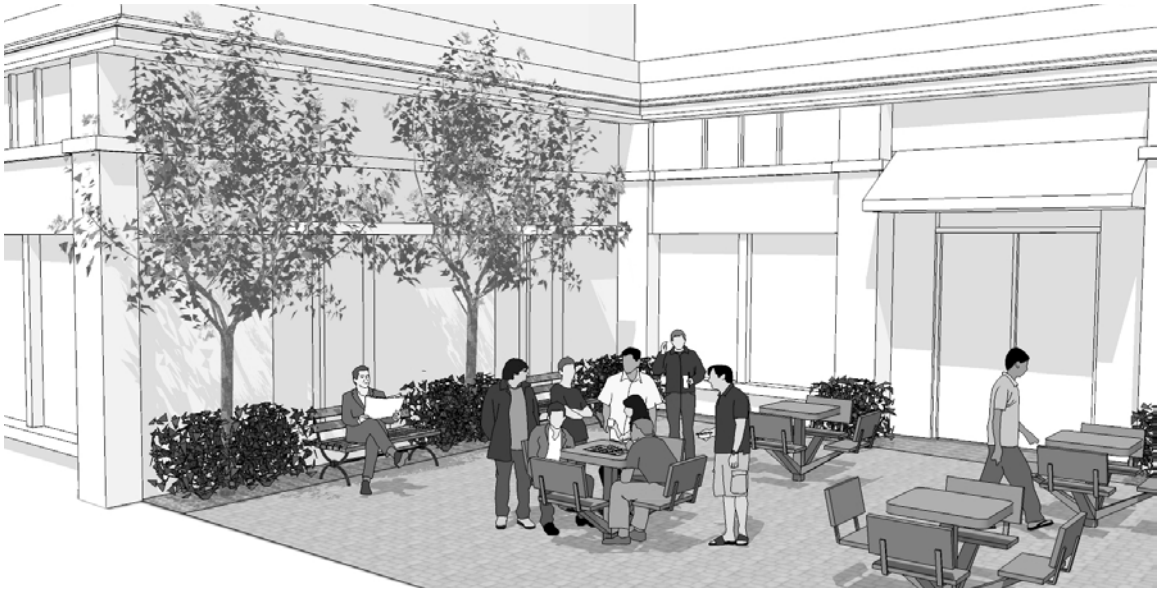
Build the ground level of commercial buildings near sidewalks and close to side property lines. A consistent series of commercial buildings constructed at the sidewalk and adjacent to one another creates a street wall and a defined pedestrian space (DG-2).

DG-4 **Front Setbacks.** Front setbacks should maintain the existing pattern of setbacks, except where a pattern change is desired, such as where land uses shift from residential to commercial uses, or similar.

DG-5 **Define Open Spaces.** Site buildings and locate plazas, courtyards, seating, and visually interesting architectural features to encourage interaction among occupants and passersby. Configure buildings to define open spaces and provide visibility and accessibility from a public street, as shown in Figure 2. Special building forms (i.e. towers) and site improvements should be incorporated to help organize and accent spaces by framing entrances, terminating views, and highlighting central focal points.

DG-6 **Avoid Colonnades.** Avoid placing colonnades on the ground floor of storefront commercial façades. Colonnades, or a row of columns supporting a roof with

Figure 2: DEFINE OPEN SPACES



Site buildings and locate plazas, courtyards, seating, and architectural features to encourage interaction among occupants and passersby. Configure buildings to define open spaces and provide visibility and accessibility from a public street (DG-5).

Existing public open space in the Planning Area is well used.

Configure buildings to define open spaces and provide visibility and accessibility (DG-5).

Improvements should be incorporated to help organize and accent spaces (DG-5) such as in this open plaza adjacent to a market and restaurant.

a storefront façade that is set back, are not recommended because they tend to reduce the visibility of retail space, detract from the definition of the street, deaden the streetscape, and provide a dark place for criminal activity, particularly at night.

DG-7 **Corner Building Design.** Emphasize and highlight architectural features at block corners to visually define and animate the intersection and facilitate pedestrian flow. Consider the following:

- Changes in height, massing, or materials, or by introducing public plazas, open eating areas, public art, and grand entries.
- Landmark features such as rounded or cut corners, increased transparency, chimneys, corner towers, roof features, and/or special shop windows or entries, or base designs.
- Design features should be well proportioned in relation to the average height of the building, other buildings at the intersection and the span of the intersection.
- If buildings do not come directly up to street corners, buildings must form a comfortable and interesting space for the public to use.

DG-8 **Primary Lot Frontage.** Locate the primary building façade and main entrance along the primary lot frontage. The primary frontage should further be maximized by active building walls and addressed by the most active, articulated and public façade of a building. Active uses, such as storefronts, dining areas, lobbies, and offices should front onto the primary lot frontage. Primary and secondary frontages are defined as follows:

- Primary lot frontages address public spaces that will likely see the most pedestrian activity or serve as important gateways. The primary lot frontage is the most public frontage that is adjacent to the waterfront, public open spaces, and streets and sidewalks.
- Secondary lot frontages include those that front onto pedestrian passthroughs and secondary streets on corner lot conditions. Secondary frontages are less public spaces that see less activity than primary frontages.
- Corner lots or sites that encompass a block may have more than one primary frontage. Where primary and secondary frontages are unclear, applicants should work closely with the City to make a determination.

DG-9 **Location of Outdoor Seating.** Locate outdoor seating with widened sidewalks to create pedestrian activity while ensuring pedestrian access.

DG-10 **Energy Efficient Building Orientation.** Site and orient buildings to take advantage of passive heating and cooling methods. Roofs should be oriented and designed to allow for solar panel or film installation for renewable energy generation or centralized solar hot water heating.

DG-11 **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.** All projects should review the surveys included in the City of Oakland's Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Security Handbook. Consistent with CPTED guidance, design buildings and public spaces such that they are defensible, meaning places are clearly identified and delineated, designed to prevent access of unauthorized persons, and provide good visibility. This can be accomplished through four overlapping strategies:

- *Natural Surveillance.* Natural Surveillance is the placement of physical features, activities, and people in ways that maximize the ability to see what is occurring in a given space. This strategy works because this exposure promotes good behavior.
- *Territorial Reinforcement.* Territorial Reinforcement is the use of buildings, fences, signs, pavement, or other objects to express ownership or to clearly delineate the transition from public space to private space. This strategy works because it suggests there is someone present who has responsibility for the space.
- *Access Control.* Access Control is the physical guidance of people coming and going from a space by the placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, locks, and other barriers. For example, walkway bollards may be placed near the entrance of a park to prevent vehicle entry but allow pedestrian entry. This strategy works because it creates a barrier against improper vehicle movement into the park.
- *Maintenance.* The upkeep of an area demonstrates that someone cares and is watching.

DG-12 **Screening of Building Equipment.** Mechanical, electrical, and all other building equipment should be concealed from all public right-of-ways, pedestrian paths and adjacent buildings. Mechanical equipment should not be located along the ground floor street frontage.

DG-13 **Screening of Refuse.** Screen refuse bins and other waste containers by placing them indoors, locating them away from the street, and/or shielding with fencing and/or landscaping.

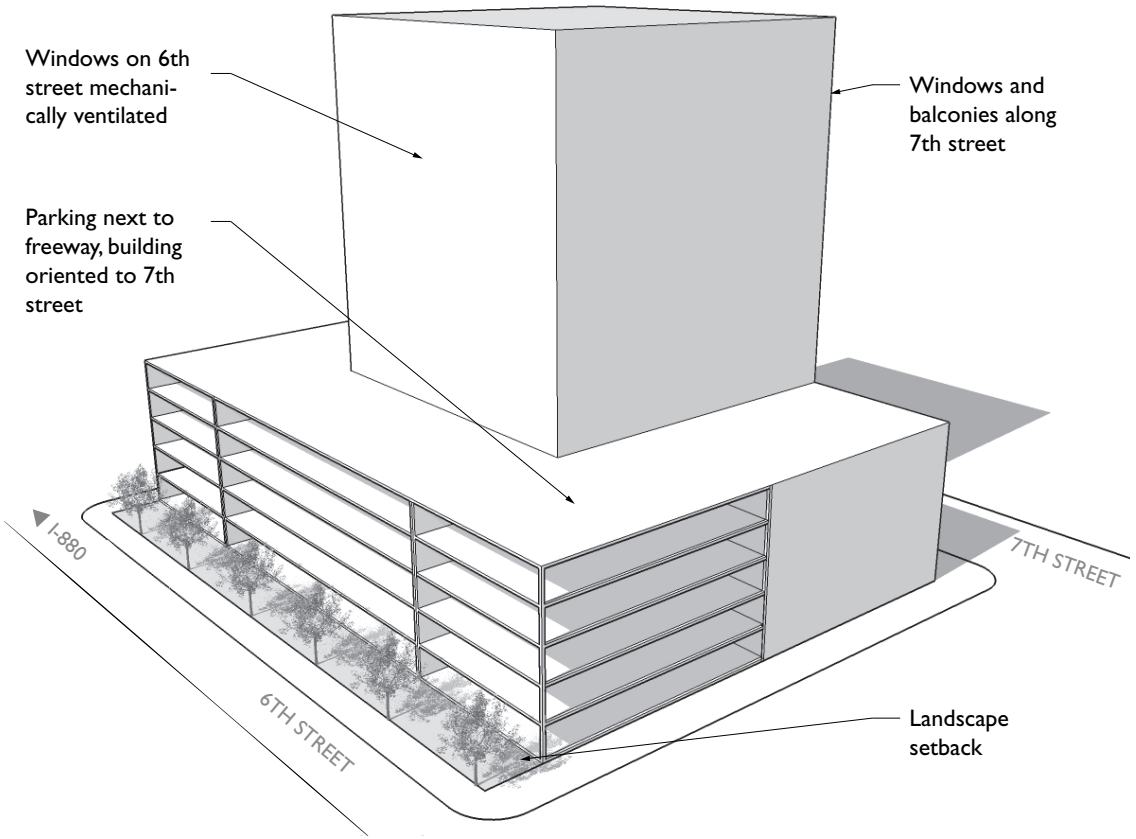
DG-14 **Sites Adjacent to the I-880 Freeway.** On sites located between 6th and 7th Streets, through careful site planning and building design, minimize noise, air quality, and visual impacts of the freeway on the building, especially on any housing units. Site planning should consider the following, as shown in Figure 3:

- Locate taller buildings to buffer the existing neighborhood from the I-880 Freeway.
- Set buildings back from the freeway and buffer with landscaping, open space, and/or off-street parking.
- Locate residential units generally above the street level.
- Orient units along 7th Street with primary operable windows and balconies in residential units along 7th Street (rather than 6th Street), such that they face away from the freeway. Windows facing 6th Street, which may offer views of the San Francisco Bay, should be mechanically ventilated.

- Ensure sufficient noise attenuation, consistent with City of Oakland standards.
- Locate courtyards, balconies and opening windows away from the freeway.
- Consider installation of sound walls or additional landscaping.
- Ensure indoor air quality, as outlined in DG-15.

DG-15 Indoor Air Quality. Require indoor air quality equipment, such as high-efficiency particulate air filters (HEPA filters), mechanical ventilation, air intakes away from pollution sources, building interiors under positive pressure, or equivalent mechanisms to minimize health risks for future residents, on sites with increased health risks due to proximity to high traffic roadways or stationary sources of toxic air contaminants.

Figure 3: SITES ADJACENT TO THE I-880 FREEWAY



Sites adjacent to the I-880 Freeway require careful site planning and building design, minimize noise, air quality, and visual impacts of the freeway on the building, especially on any housing units (DG-14).

Reduce the apparent bulk of a building by segmenting it into smaller masses that correspond to the internal function of the building (DG-16).

Employ variations in façades and incorporate design features, such as recesses, and windows (DG-16).

Building Massing and Scale

Building massing and scale have a great impact on neighborhood compatibility. Guidelines seek to ensure integration of new buildings into the existing character of the area, while allowing for more intense development and taller buildings. New buildings and additions should reinforce the historic pattern with setbacks and upper-level stepbacks oriented to the many existing low- to mid-rise buildings.

Massing and Scale

DG-16 Three-dimensional Articulation. Articulate building mass and surfaces with three-dimensional elements that create a visual play of light and shadow:

- Incorporate design features, such as balconies, recesses, windows, window frames, reveals, brackets, bay windows, cornices at the roof and at the top of the ground floor, and piers at corners and structural bays.
- Employ variations in façades (such as shallow recesses at entries, arcades, roof styles, colonnades, architectural details), and finishes that break up the appearance of large buildings.
- Reduce the apparent building bulk by segmenting it into smaller masses corresponding to the internal function of the building. Consider grouping windows and/or adding loggias. Repetitive elements or monolithic treatments should be avoided.

DG-17 Reinforce the Existing Rhythm. Design buildings so the location, massing, and scale of new buildings reinforces the existing rhythm of buildings, storefronts,

and the spaces between them. Since there is much variety within the Planning Area, this will vary by area, but the predominant pattern is of 25 to 50 foot parcel frontages. Where new building frontages are longer, they should break up façades into separate bays that reflect the general rhythm of existing building widths.

DG-18 **Transitions in Building Height.** Where the height of new development exceeds the height of existing adjacent buildings, smooth transitions can be achieved through various approaches depending on the specific location and context of development, including:

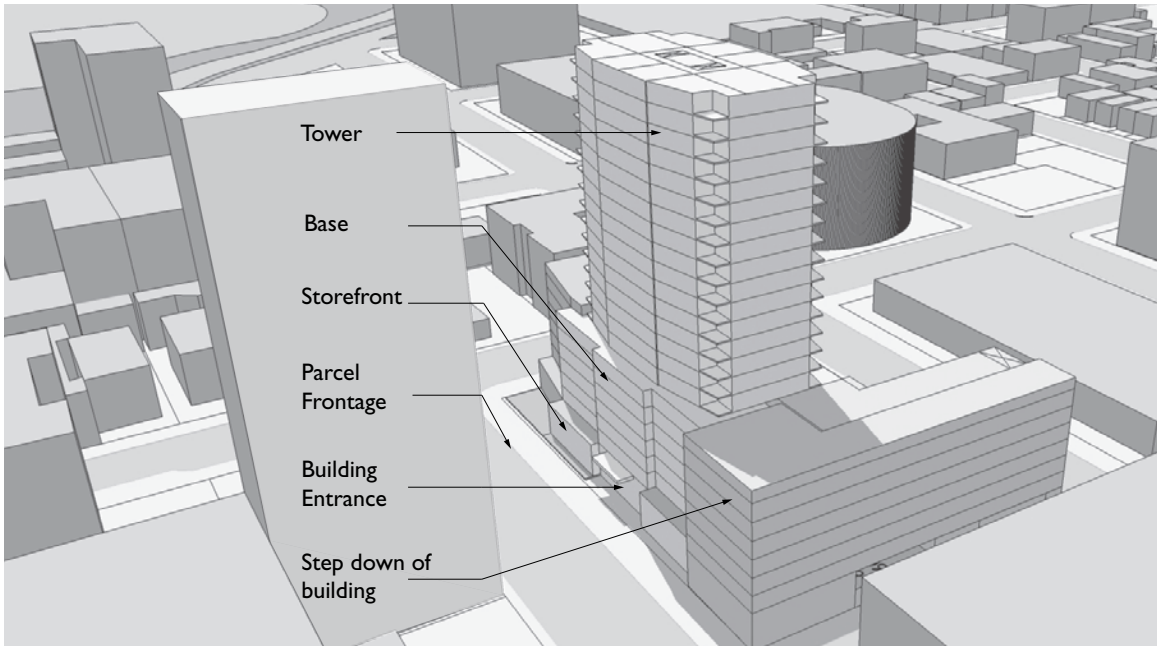
- Dividing high-rise massing to reduce overall bulk and/or step down towards lower adjacent structures, as shown in Figure 4.
- Incorporating architectural elements, such as cornices, to add horizontal consistency to the street wall.

DG-19 **Step Back Above the Podium Height.** Step buildings back above the base height, as shown in Figure 5. Base heights vary throughout the Planning Area, relative to the surrounding neighborhood context.

DG-20 **Reduce Overall Massing.** Encourage open spaces and walkways to break up building mass and create visual breaks.

DG-21 **Minimize Shadow.** Give consideration to the potential shade impacts on surroundings and design buildings such that heights, massing, and site plans respond to potential shading issues. Locate towers to minimize shadow on public spaces and ensure access to sunlight at high-use times of day.

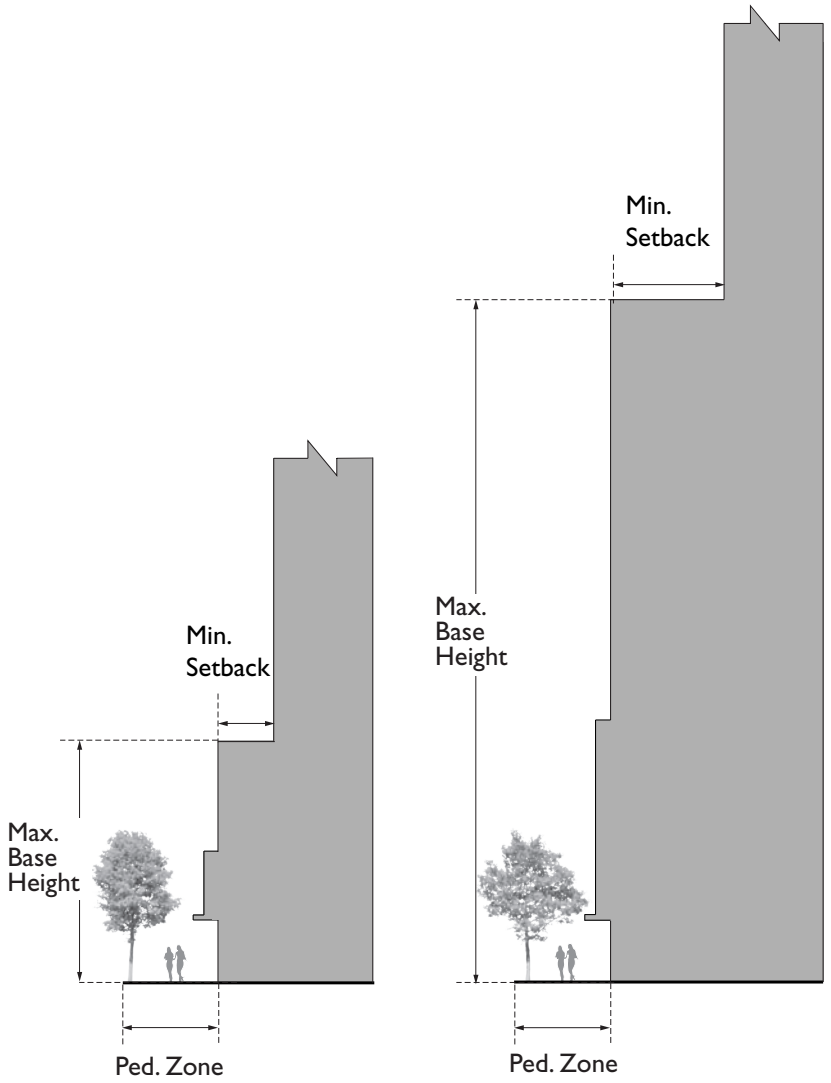
Figure 4: TRANSITIONS IN BUILDING HEIGHT



Where the height of new development exceeds the height of existing adjacent buildings, smooth transitions can be achieved by dividing high-rise massing to reduce overall bulk and/or step down towards lower adjacent structures (DG-18).

Reduce mass, step down, and incorporate architectural elements that establish a consistent rhythm to the street in order to transition to existing adjacent buildings (DG-18).

Figure 5: STEP BACK ABOVE THE PODIUM HEIGHT



Step buildings back above the base height. Base heights vary throughout the Planning Area, relative to the surrounding neighborhood context. Larger setbacks may be more appropriate above the base for buildings with taller base heights (DG-19).

Towers

These concepts aim to limit the impact of towers and ensure towers are well integrated into the existing neighborhood context.

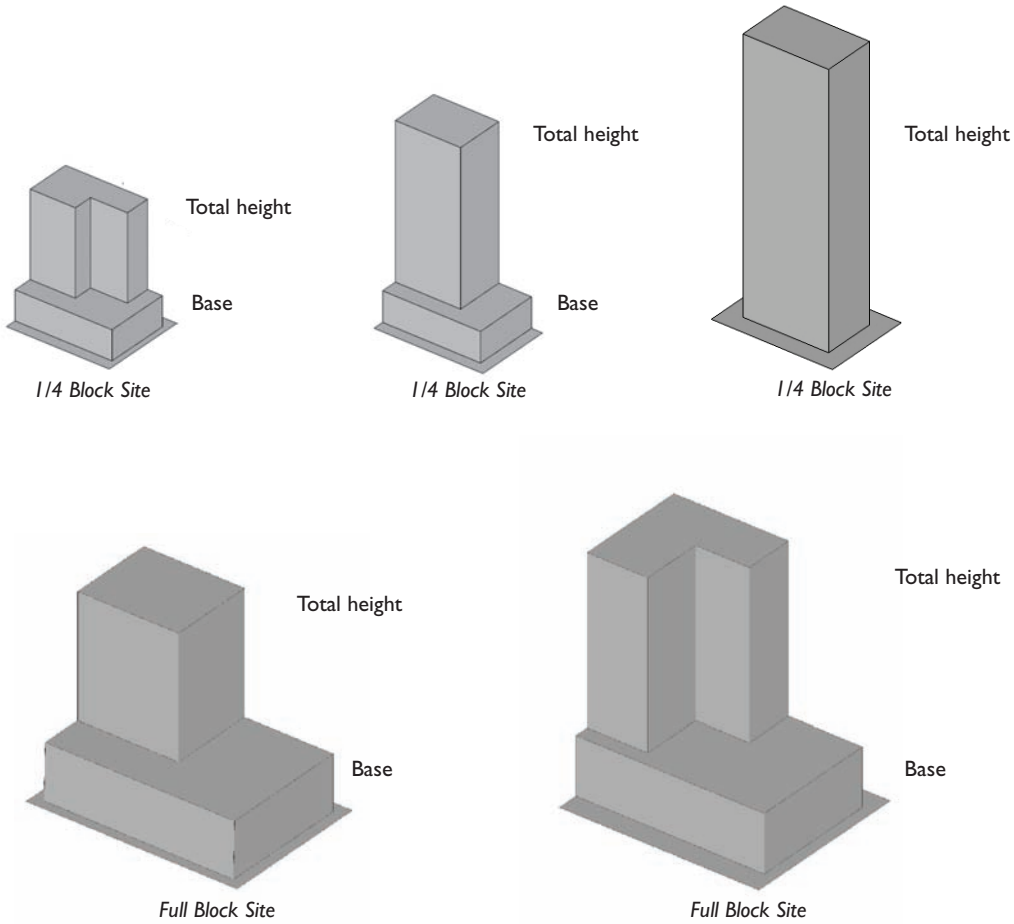
DG-22 **Slender Towers.** Towers should be slender in order to minimize the casting of large shadows and reducing apparent bulk from the street level. Towers should taper, step back, or otherwise employ a reduction in massing above the allowable base height, as shown in Figure 6.

DG-23 **Tower Spacing.** Towers should be spaced to allow sunlight, air, and privacy for tenants while maintaining views and natural light at the street level.

DG-24 **Distinguish Tower Design.** The tower should be stepped back from the building base and the top of the tower should be further distinguished with a step back and/or architectural features.

DG-25 **Skyline.** Towers should be designed to enhance the City skyline without blocking significant views from other buildings. In particular, consider views from across Lake Merritt and from the San Francisco Bay.

Figure 6: TOWERS



Towers should be slender in order to minimize the casting of large shadows and reducing apparent bulk from the street level. Towers should taper, step back, or otherwise employ a reduction in massing above the allowable base height (DG-22).






Tower design should consider the impact to the pedestrian experience. Towers should be spaced for sunlight, should be slender and step back from the base to reduce apparent bulk from street level, should incorporate interesting architectural features, and should consider the Oakland skyline (DG-22 through DG-25).

Building Façade Articulation

These concepts aim to ensure a high-quality pedestrian realm and vibrant and active streets, and to foster the mix of traditional and contemporary design in the Planning Area.

DG-26 **Pedestrian Scale.** Provide pedestrian-scaled façade articulation to create an active and inviting public realm, create visual interest and diversity, and reinforce the pedestrian scale and character of the street, as shown in Figure 7. In particular, the first two to three stories of new development should relate to existing patterns, including fine grain scale, multiple entries, and flexible scales. Articulation may include bays, horizontal banding, sills, fenestration, alcoves, awnings/canopies, trellises, well defined entries, storefront design, and other pedestrian amenities.

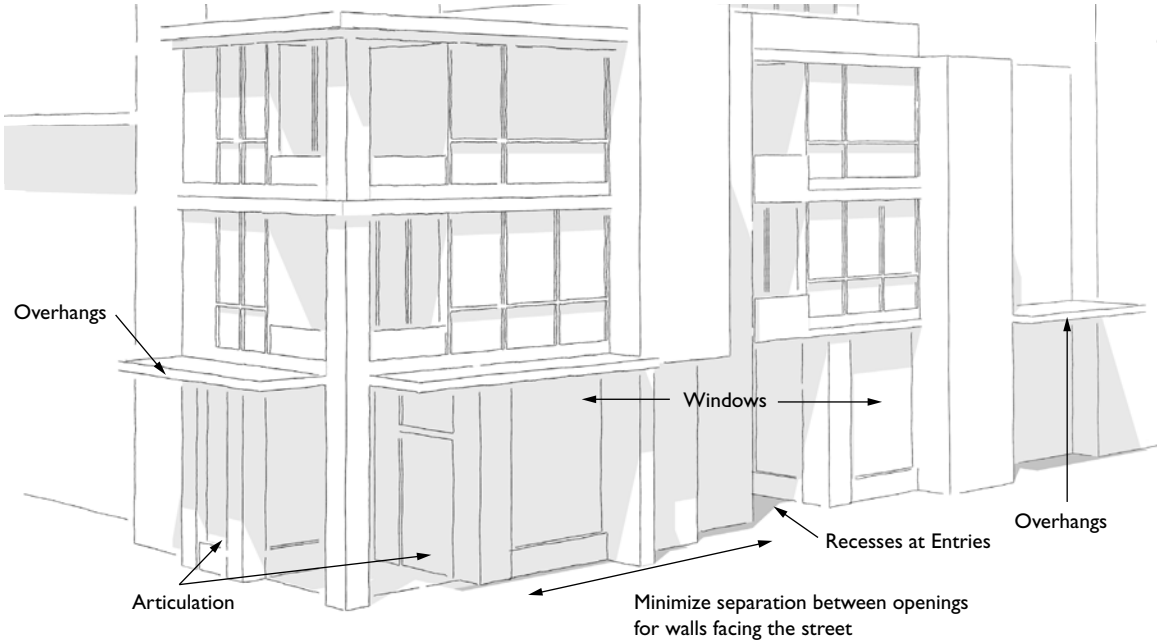
DG-27 **Active Upper-Stories.** Activate upper-story step-back areas with open spaces or roof gardens.

DG-28 **Articulation.** Incorporate architectural articulation along the length of the façade, and recesses at building entrances, plazas, private open space, etc.

DG-29 **Ground Floor Entrances.** Carefully design entrances to be distinct and prominent features of a building, particularly lobby entrances. Consider the following techniques:

- The main entrance(s) should be larger than other doors on the façade with prominent architectural features consistent with the style of the building.
- Consider use of features such as a prominent lintel, distinctive architectural detailing, and awnings.
- Residential entryways should be a prominent feature on the building façade.
- Always orient main entrances toward the principal street, not toward parking lots.
- Place at least one prominent pedestrian entrance facing the principal street. At least one prominent entrance should be provided for each building.
- Historic entrance patterns should be respected.

Figure 7: PEDESTRIAN SCALE ARTICULATION



Provide pedestrian-scaled façade articulation to create an active and inviting public realm, create visual interest and diversity, and reinforce the pedestrian scale and character of the street. Articulation may include bays, horizontal banding, sills, fenestration, alcoves, awnings/canopies, trellises, well defined entries, storefront design, and other pedestrian amenities (DG-26).

Alcoves that allow outdoor eating and awnings establish the pedestrian scale (DG-26 top). Activate upper-stories with private open spaces (DG-27 middle). Main entrances should be larger than other doors on the façade and window design can be used to add architectural interest (DG-29 and DG-31 bottom).

DG-30 **Entrance Hierarchy.** A clear, hierarchical distinction should be made between primary entrances and secondary entrances. Primary entrances should be clearly expressed to impart a sense of prominence through scale, detailing and ornamentation that clearly denotes their stature as the main access to a building.

DG-31 **Window Design.** Use window design and proportions to add architectural interest to buildings and differentiate the various components of the building (e.g. ground floor retail spaces, stair towers, corners, office suites, or residential units). Use window frames, sills, and/or recesses to add visual interest.

DG-32 **Views of Indoor Space.** Street facing building façades containing non-residential uses, and street facing building façades containing retail uses, should provide transparency such that windows allow views of indoor space between two and nine feet above the sidewalk, as shown in Figure 8.

DG-33 **Consistent Horizontal Lines.** Design horizontal lines of new buildings (such as cornice lines or the top or bottom of a row of windows or balconies), to generally be in the same alignment or within three feet higher or lower than existing structures horizontal features (such as cornice line or total height), to establish continuity, as shown in Figure 8.

DG-34 **Façade.** Ensure unified and harmonious building façades by integrating all architectural elements, including signs, artistic elements, balconies, building entrances, and lighting. Windows should have regular patterns and be coherent in shape and proportion.

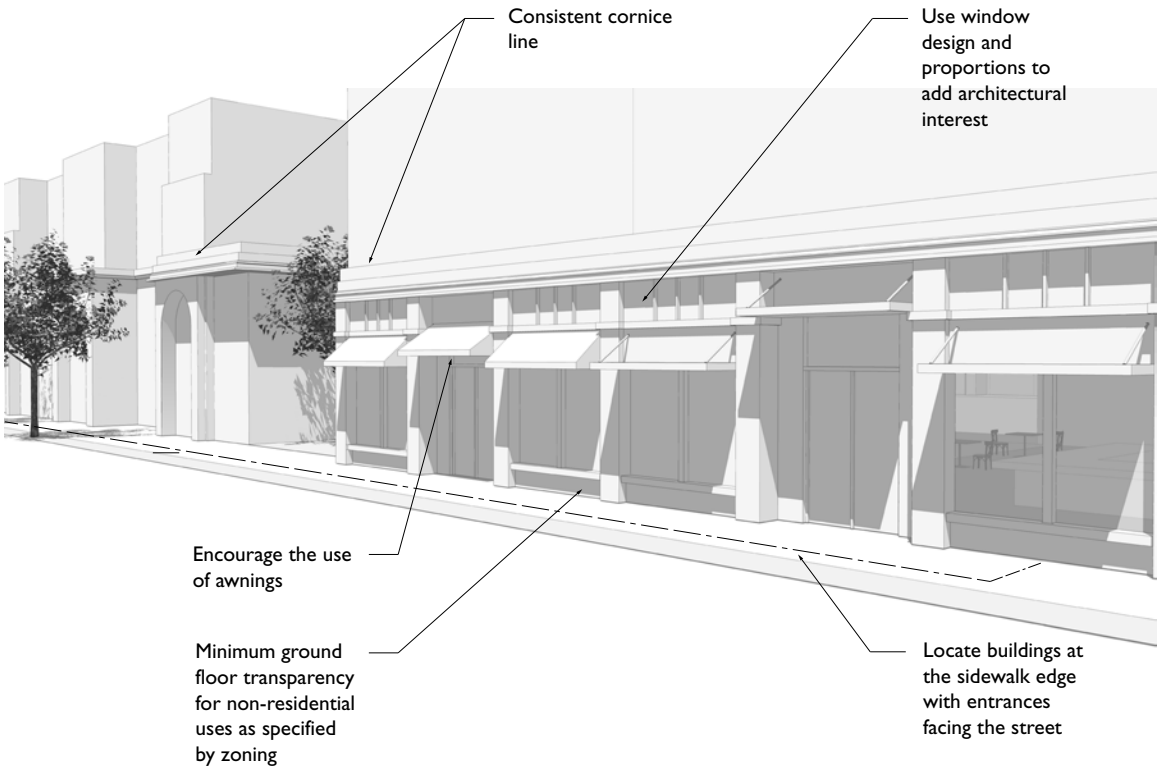
DG-35 **Awnings.** Encourage the use of awnings, canopies, and over-hangs to provide shelter and shade over the main entrances and along the sidewalk on pedestrian-oriented retail streets, to enhance the pedestrian realm. Awnings are particularly beneficial on south- and west-facing sides of the street. Awnings should be:

- In scale with the building, and divided into sections to reflect major vertical divisions of the façade.
- Placed below the ground-floor cornice line (or below the sills of second floor windows if no cornice exists). Avoid covering transom windows and other architectural elements.
- Designed to be decorative, complementary to the overall design of the building, and effective for weather and sun protection.
- Project awnings over doors and windows.
- Designed so as to not interfere with the tree canopy or signage.

DG-36 **Integrate Artistic Details.** If feasible, integrate artistic details to provide visual interest to the façade of the building. These features can provide visual surprise and interest, and should be consistent with the design style of the building.

DG-37 **Garage Doors.** Integrate garage doors into the building design and reduce their prominence on the street. Garage doors should not be a prominent feature of a street facing façade. The following methods help reduce the visual prominence of garage doors:

Figure 8: STREETWALL

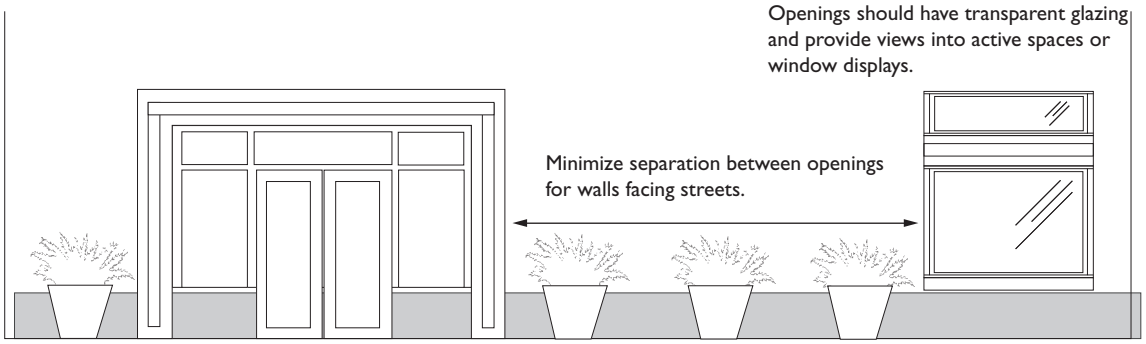


Streetwall components include window design, views of indoor spaces through use of ground floor transparency, consistent horizontal lines such as cornice lines, unified and harmonious façades, use of awnings, and minimized blank walls (DG-32 through DG-35 and DG-38).

Views of indoor spaces are important to establish interaction between the street and business interiors (DG-32 top). Rows of windows above the ground floor create consistency between adjacent buildings (DG-33 middle). Integrate architectural elements, including balconies, entrances, and lighting (DG-34 bottom).

Awnings in the Chinatown Commercial core (top). Awnings should be decorative and complementary to the overall design and provide shelter and shade (DG-35 middle and bottom).

Figure 9: BLANK WALL LIMITATION



Minimize the amount of the linear frontage of the first story street wall that may consist of blank walls (DG-38).

- Garage doors should face a side street wherever feasible, particularly on transit priority streets.
- Dimension garage doors as narrow as is functionally feasible while still meeting Planning and Building code requirements.
- Place the garage door toward the end of the façade, not in the middle or toward the intersection.
- Recess the garage door.
- Call attention to other prominent architectural elements on the façade.
- Design the garage door to be consistent with the architectural style of the building.

DG-38 Blank Wall Limitations. Minimize the amount of the linear frontage of the first story street wall that may consist of blank walls, as shown in Figure 9. The maximum length of any continuous blank wall is generally 30 feet and no more than one third of a street frontage. Where blank walls are unavoidable, reduce the impact by:

- Placing blank walls as out of view as possible from the street.
- Providing architectural treatments such as panels, contrasting textures, high-quality and interesting building materials, blind windows, special landscape treatment, murals or other public art, and/or exterior detailing. As much creativity should be given to these walls as to the rest of the façade of the building.
- Extensive use of green screens to break up a façade is not a recommended solution.

Ground Level Commercial

DG-39 Storefronts. Define individual storefronts with architectural elements such as piers or changes in plane. Complete storefront façades should include doors, large display windows, bulkheads, signage areas, and awnings. Frequent entries and windows with visible activity should occur on all publicly exposed façades of commercial buildings. Dis-

play windows should enliven the street and provide pedestrian views into the interior of the storefront.

DG-40 Large Retail. Where large retail establishments are provided, design buildings to support the pedestrian-oriented environment:

- Locate and orient buildings along primary street edges and public spaces,
- Provide fenestration (windows, glass storefronts and doors), and cohesive signage.
- Incorporate an appropriate level of design detail, ensuring that loading, storage and equipment areas are screened and well-integrated into the building.
- Encourage large urban retail stores to use a multi-story format.

DG-41 Outdoor Seating. Encourage dining establishments to provide outdoor seating:

- Within the sidewalk right-of-way, provided the city's minimum clear zone for pedestrians is maintained (5.5 feet minimum, eight feet desired).
- By allowing an additional set-back of five to 20 feet from the street wall, if that space is regularly used for outdoor seating, and is maintained by the business.

DG-42 Flexible Commercial Space. Provide ground floor building spaces large enough to create viable and flexible commercial space. All commercial ground floors should:

Interrupt blank walls with windows, design elements, and landscape treatments (DG-38 top). Storefronts should include doors, large display windows, and awnings (DG-39 middle and bottom).

Encourage large urban retail stores to use a multi-story format (DG-40 top) and encourage outdoor seating in order to further activate the street (DG-41 middle and bottom).

- Have a minimum height of fifteen feet measured from grade to the floor plate of the second story. This enhances the viability of retail spaces and gives the building a stronger street presence.
- Be at least fifteen feet wide and forty feet deep, wherever feasible under the constraints of the building floor plan. The minimum width allows for adequate entry and street front display space; the minimum depth allows for adequate shopping space, back room operational area, and bathrooms.

DG-43 **Large Retail Spaces.** Large retail spaces are encouraged to incorporate space for smaller retail uses within the larger retail space, particularly on street frontage.

DG-44 **Infrastructure.** Encourage ground-floor commercial spaces to be equipped with the necessary building infrastructure like gas lines, grease traps, water hook-ups, etc., to accommodate food service establishments.

DG-45 **Promote Safety in Commercial Design.** Incorporate CPTED principals in project design to ensure patrons feel safe frequenting businesses and are encouraged to return. Review the full survey in the City's CPTED Security Handbook. Also see DG-11 for more details.

Ground Level Residential Buildings

DG-46 **Street Wall Openings.** Multi-family developments may contain openings in the street wall to allow for the extension of interior courtyards to the public street. Any security gating or fencing across this area should be a minimum 75 percent transparent to provide views into the courtyard.

DG-47 **Façade.** In multifamily developments, articulate ground floor residential building façades to differentiate individual residential units from each other and from the overall massing of the building, in order to express a rhythm of individual units along the street. Façades should include stoops, porches, recessed windows, and bay windows or balconies, as shown in Figure 10.

DG-48 **Entry.** All residential units should have the primary entrance, either individual or shared, facing a street and should incorporate a projection (e.g. porch or stoop) or recess, as shown in Figure 10.

DG-49 **Transitional Features.** Site transitional features in the front setback of residential buildings. Entrances should provide a connection to the street through stoops, a pathway, or porches.

DG-50 **Prominent Ground Floor.** Establish a prominent ground floor in residential buildings. Design a tall ground floor to establish a street presence and human scale. Generally, this requires at least fifteen feet from the grade to the floor of the second story, as shown in Figure 10.

Residential Livability

For residential development with one or two primary dwelling units, or the residential portions of mixed use development projects with one or two primary dwelling units, please see the City of Oakland *Interim Design Review Manual for One-and Two-Unit Residences.*

DG-51 **Privacy.** Maintain a sense of privacy from within housing units, while allowing views onto streets and interior courtyards. For instance, in residential units with narrow side yards, place side elevation windows so that they are offset from those of the adjacent unit, position windows on upper floor balconies so as to minimize views into neighboring properties or use obscure glass as appropriate in order to ensure privacy.

DG-52 **Family-Friendly Housing.** Design family-friendly housing and units for a range of ages. Situate family-oriented units to maximize accessibility and visibility for parents watching children playing on the sidewalk or courtyard.

DG-53 **Range of Unit Sizes.** Provide variety of unit sizes, including studios and units with three or more bedrooms.

DG-54 **Orientation.** Design units to allow sunlight for at least part of the day.

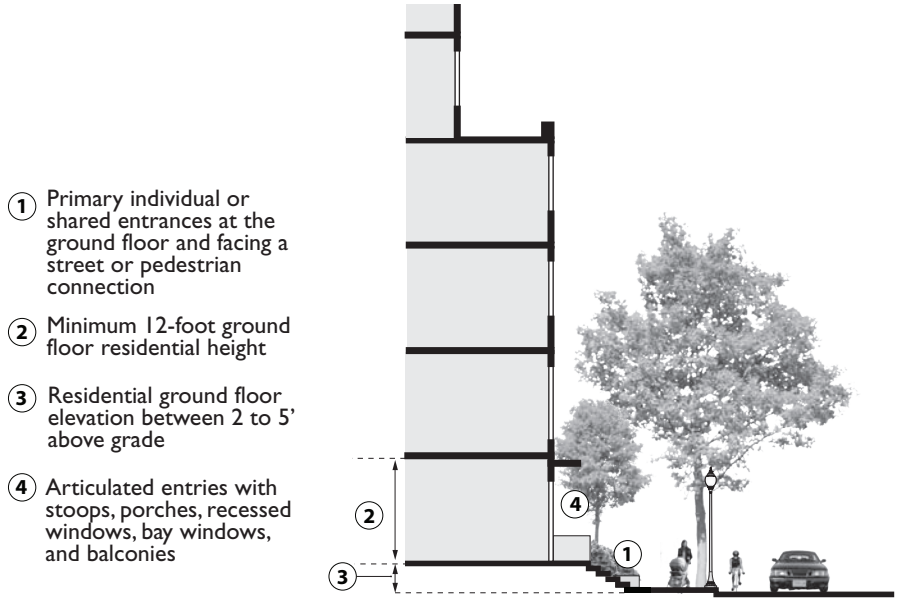
DG-55 **Operable Windows.** To the maximum extent possible, provide some operable windows in all housing units, to allow in light and fresh air, and also to potentially eliminate the need for mechanical ventilation, where mechanical ventilation is not required for air filtering purposes. Where ventilation systems are necessary, include a minimum of two operable windows where feasible and use energy-efficient and low emission heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

DG-56 **Promote Safety in Residential Design.** Incorporate CPTED principals in project design. Review the full survey in the City's CPTED Security Handbook.

DG-57 **Shared Spaces.** Provide areas that consist of landscaped areas, walks, patios, barbeque areas, playgrounds, recreational facilities, turf, or other such improvements as are appropriate to enhance the outdoor environment of the development.

- *Location*. Where community rooms are planned, locate them adjacent to either the private common open space or public open space.
- *Seating*. Provide ample seating, which can be comprised of benches, seating walls, and moveable seating. Arrange seating for gathering, conversing, and supervising children play areas. A majority of seating should have back support.
- *Orientation*. Design private common open spaces to maximize sunlight while providing wind protection and shading, and minimize noise impacts.
- *Safety*. Ensure safety and visibility by designing at least a portion of units to overlook the common open space and allowing security cameras to monitor common spaces, if appropriate.

Figure 10: RESIDENTIAL GROUND LEVEL DESIGN



Façades should include stoops, porches, recessed windows, and bay windows or balconies (DG-47). All residential units should have the primary entrance, either individual or shared, facing a street and should incorporate a projection (e.g. porch or stoop) or recess (DG-48). Design a tall ground floor to establish a street presence and human scale (DG-50).

Multi-family developments may contain openings in the street wall to allow for the extension of interior courtyards to the public street (DG-46).

Differentiate individual residential units from each other and from the overall massing of the building, in order to express a rhythm of individual units along the street (DG-47).

Primary residential entrances should incorporate projections, such as stoops, porches, recessed windows, and bay windows or balconies (DG-48).

Architectural details add special character of the Chinatown Commercial District API, which is characterized by small-scale, early 20th-century commercial buildings (DG-64 top, middle, and bottom). 800-33 Harrison Street is a successful example of adaptive reuse in this API (DG-67 bottom).

Historic Resources

This section is complementary to the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan Chapter 7: Cultural Resources, and the *Historic Preservation Element (HPE)* of City of Oakland's *General Plan*, both of which address the wealth of historic resources in the Planning Area. Both historic preservation and adaptive re-use are encouraged in the Planning Area; the following guidelines build on other sections for guidance specific to historic resources, including new buildings in historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings. For additional guidance related to transitions between existing buildings and new development, including height, see the Massing and Scale section, page 12.

DG-58 Contribute to Historic Districts. New buildings developed within historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings should seek to contribute to the existing historic and architectural character of the area, while also seeking to be recognized as products of their own time. Consider how the style, massing, rhythm, setbacks and material of new development may affect the character of adjacent resources.

DG-59 Complement and Reinforce the Scale. The massing and scale of new buildings within historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings should reinforce the existing rhythm of buildings and spaces between buildings. The predominant parcel pattern for the Chinatown API is 25- to 50-foot parcel frontages, the parcel pattern for the 7th Street API is 25-foot parcel frontages. The King Block has typically larger parcel sizes, but frontage is typically broken into smaller increments.

DG-60 Complement and Reinforce the Street wall. Locate new buildings within historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings to complement the existing street wall. Site buildings such that the setback of a new building should reinforce the prevailing average setbacks of adjacent historic buildings.

DG-61 Complement and Reinforce Building Articulation. Entrances, stoops, porches, and other projections should be incorporated in new buildings within historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings which relate to the pattern of existing adjacent buildings and contribute to a consistent rhythm and continuity of features along the street. For instance, front stoops and porches occur on many historic buildings in the 7th Street API and could be a compatible feature on new buildings.

DG-62 Complement and Reinforce Architectural Details. The architectural details of new buildings within historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings should relate to existing buildings. Such details may include lintels, cornices, arches, chimneys, and ironwork. Since there is such a large variety of styles and details within the historic districts in the Planning Area, new development must specifically consider adjacent properties.

DG-63 Building Form. The complexity of the form and shape of new buildings within historic districts or adjacent to historic buildings should be compatible with existing adjacent buildings. The degree to which a new building is simple or complex in form and shape should be based upon the dominant characteristics of architecture of the area. New buildings in areas where simpler forms prevail should

reflect that simplicity, while the existence of more complex forms (e.g. Queen Anne and other Victorian styles) allows for more richness and variation.

DG-64 **Chinatown Commercial District API.** The architectural details of new buildings within or adjacent to the Chinatown Commercial District API should relate to existing distinguishing features of the district. The Chinatown Commercial District is characterized by small-scale, early 20th-century commercial buildings. Uses generally are retail and commercial on the ground floor, with residential or offices on upper floors. Similar architectural and façade features crop up in remodelings done in the 1960s and 1970s. The area is characterized by high density and lively sidewalk activity.

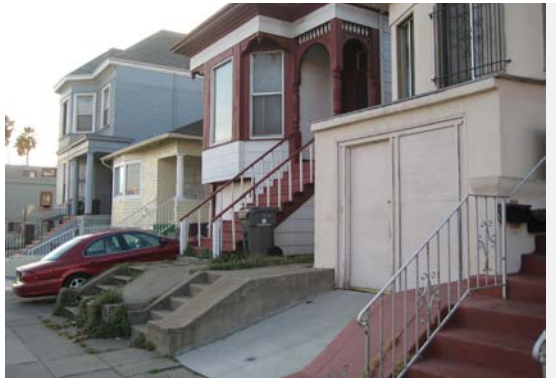
DG-65 **7th Street/Harrison Square Residential Historic District API.** The architectural details of new buildings within or adjacent to the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential Historic District API should relate to existing distinguishing features of the district. Most of the buildings in the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District are detached one- or two-story wood frame structures set back from the sidewalk line, including many Victorian and Colonial Revival cottages and houses. The district began as a residential area and continues largely so to this day. Except for the intrusions of some industrial buildings and apartment buildings, the district is unified in scale, apparent density, use, and relationship of buildings to lots.

DG-66 **Pitched Roofs in the 7th Street API.** New development at the predominant height in the 7th Street Historic API should include a pitched roof (which is included in the total height of the building). Roof pitch should be consistent with or complementary to adjacent historic buildings.

DG-67 **Adaptive Reuse.** Retain and integrate historic and architecturally significant structures into larger projects with adaptive reuse. When adapting or altering historic resources, consider the following:

- Work within the existing building envelope is recommended; where additions are desired, they should generally be located on a secondary or rear façade.
- Avoid removal of historic resources or covering historic architectural details with cladding, awnings, or signage.
- Use historic photos to inform rehabilitation, if available.
- Use materials and colors that complement the historic character of the property.
- Consider consultation with a preservation architect to ensure renovations are compatible. Consult with City's historic preservation staff.

DG-68 **Preservation.** Avoid removal of historic resources.



Architectural details add special character to the 7th Street API, which is typified by detached one- or two-story wood frame structures set back from the sidewalk line, and pitched roofs (DG-65 and DG-66 top, middle, and bottom).

Use high-quality, durable architectural materials and finishes (DG-69 top and middle) and accent materials to add texture, color, and visual interest (DG-77 bottom).

Building Materials, Color, and Lighting

Choice in building materials is an important contributor to the quality of the building and the public realm.

DG-69 **High Quality Materials.** Use high-quality, durable architectural materials and finishes that provide a sense of permanence throughout the exterior and public interior spaces of the buildings. Exterior building materials should generally be brick, painted wood clap-board, metal panels, or other quality, durable materials. Materials palette should be reflective of the character of the location and type of architecture and use of the building, and a unified palette of materials should be used on all sides of buildings. Stucco and concrete should not be overused, but can be utilized in a high quality manner.

DG-70 **Ground Floor Materials.** Install durable and attractive materials on the ground floor façade of buildings that will not easily exhibit wear and tear. This is especially important for buildings that have minimal or no front setback because pedestrians can easily make contact with the façade. The material on the ground floor should be attractive and carefully detailed to set it apart from upper stories. Durable materials include masonry, tile, brick, metal, stone, and architectural concrete. Wood may be acceptable depending on its sturdiness and appearance. Stucco should be of smooth finish to not collect dirt, and should not be used at the bulkhead of a building because it will collect dirt and easily stain.

DG-71 **Upper Level Materials.** Exterior materials on the upper levels of buildings should create a sense of permanence, provide an attractive visual quality, and be consistent with the design concept of the building. Consider the following for upper level materials choices:

- Recommended exterior treatments include decorative brick, wood or high density wood composite, or cement pane siding that contain horizontal or vertical lines for visual interest.
- Metal siding can be used if consistent with the design concept of the building. Use metal siding with a factory finish; avoid metal products with an unfinished appearance.
- Use durable woods such as cedar shingles, or ipe siding that are either painted or left in their natural state. Also consider the use of high density, durable wood composites instead of wood. This type of material can provide the visual interest of traditional wood without the maintenance concerns. Avoid stained wood because it easily weathers and runs.
- Use cement panels thick enough to resist warping when they are installed.
- Stucco is an acceptable exterior finish if appropriate for the design concept of a building. Stucco should generally be of a smooth to medium finish so that dirt and grime do not easily accumulate on the building façade.

DG-72 **Sustainable Materials.** To minimize the overall environmental impact of development, use sustainable building materials to the maximum extent feasible which are recycled, renewable, sustainably harvested, locally sourced, and are non-toxic/ low-VOC (volatile organic compound).

DG-73 **Color.** Color palettes should reinforce building identity and should complement changes in plane.

DG-74 **Glazing.** Glazing should be clear or lightly tinted and non-reflective.

DG-75 **Reflective Materials.** For tower portions of buildings and buildings that front onto public open spaces, lighter exterior colors with high light reflectance (without producing glare) should be used to maximize daylight onto public open spaces, streets and sidewalks.

DG-76 **Green Roofs.** Green roofs can be incorporated into building design to manage stormwater runoff and reduce energy consumption. All green roofs must be designed to permit routine maintenance and irrigation, as necessary.

DG-77 **Accent Materials.** Accent materials should be employed at the ground level to add texture, color, and visual interest at the pedestrian level.

DG-78 **Building Lighting.** Design exterior building lighting as an integral part of the façade:

- Lighting fixtures should be architecturally compatible with the building's style and should be placed to accent other architectural features.
- Building-mounted lighting is recommended for pedestrian-oriented and high-visibility areas.
- Design lighting standards and fixtures to be harmonious with the building design, and complement lighting in the public right-of-way.
- Provide lighting at all entryways, alcoves or other features of the building to ensure visual surveillance of the building and its public areas.
- Encourage display window lighting in storefronts and lighting under the awning, as security measures.
- Lighting should comply with CPTED strategies, including:
  - Use of energy efficient and break-resistant lighting to enable consistent use.
  - Ensure that building lighting illuminates building numbers, access, front and back areas, and corners.
  - Ensure lighting provides a cone of light downward to walkways.
  - Provide lighting between buildings to distinguish forms and movement.

Signage

See the City of Oakland's *Small Project Design Guidelines* for additional guidance on signage.

DG-79 **Illumination.** Provide sign illumination appropriate to the building design and location.

- Consider up-lit signage or use of accent lighting or other subtle illumination to improve visibility at night.
- Prohibit any sign that, because of brilliant interior or exterior lighting, interferes with the enjoyment of surrounding property or interferes with traffic.
- Externally lit signs should not illuminate upper stories; instead, illumination should focus on the sign itself or downward toward the sidewalk.

DG-80 **Visibility.** Place signs for easy visibility and ensure that projecting signs are strictly controlled to ensure that they do not obstruct each other.

Signage should be visible and compatible with building architecture (DG-80 and DG-81, top, middle, and bottom).

Use landscaping to enhance the pedestrian realm (DG-85 top and middle) and use California native and drought-tolerant plants (DG-87 bottom).

DG-81 Architectural Compatibility. Ensure new signage is compatible with building architecture and character.

- Signs (including supporting structures, if any) should be designed as an integral design element of a building's architecture and should be architecturally compatible, including color and scale, with the building.
- Avoid signs that cover a window or that spills over "natural" boundaries or architectural features and/or obscures parts of upper floors of buildings as it is detrimental to visual order.
- Signs above the first story should not obstruct views from inside or outside upper stories.
- High quality materials should be used, such as finished wood, metal, and durable woven fabric.

DG-82 Consistency with Area Character. Ensure new signage is compatible with the character of existing buildings.

- Signs should employ designs, features, materials, and colors that are consistent with the scale and character of the district in which they are located. Bilingual signage is encouraged in the Planning Area.
- New signage should complement or create an interesting and pleasing contrast to existing buildings and signage on the same block or adjacent blocks.

DG-83 Legibility and Readability. Ensure new signage is easily understood.

- The size and proportion of the elements of the sign's message, including logos, letters, icons, and other graphic images, should be selected based on the anticipated distance and travel speed of the viewer. Sign messages oriented towards pedestrians should be smaller than those oriented towards automobile drivers.
- Design signs to be readable and concise, so that a viewer can understand or make sense of what appears on the sign. Excessive use of large areas of several colors can create competition for the eye and reduce readability.

Landscaping

DG-84 Buffer Landscaping. Use landscaping to buffer noise, air quality, and visual impacts and changes in use—particularly in transition zones between commercial or industrial and residential uses, and adjacent to the I-880 Freeway.

DG-85 Landscaping. Use landscaping to enhance and identify the pedestrian realm and entrances and to articulate strong edges for plazas and courtyards. Landscaping should not create blind spots or hiding spots.

DG-86 Landscaping. Use trellises and vines or other plantings on building exteriors to insulate and cool interiors.

DG-87 Native and Drought-Tolerant Plants. Follow the Bay-Friendly Landscaping standards and use California native and drought-tolerant plants to reduce water needs and avoid reduce invasive species.

DG-88 **Stormwater.** Manage stormwater on-site through such methods as green roofs and/or rooftop gardens or water catchment systems to be used for irrigation.

DG-89 **Sustainable Surfaces.** Use sustainable surface materials for paving to the maximum extent feasible, such as reclaimed pavers, locally-produced materials, or concrete and asphalt with fly ash content.

DG-90 **Visibility.** Prune shrubs to no more than 42 inches high and trees up seven feet from the ground in order to maintain shade provided by trees, the curb appeal of shrubbery, and a clear, unobstructed view.

Parking

DG-91 **Location.** Where possible, locate parking structures either partly or entirely below grade. Surface parking lots should be considered temporary uses. If parking is located above ground, locate commercial building space at the street, at least 15 feet in height and 20 feet deep.

DG-92 **Vehicular Access.** Minimize the number and size of curb cuts and share access drives to parking facilities wherever feasible, in order to expand pedestrian space, reduce conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles, ensure pedestrian safety, and increase the supply of on-street parking.

DG-93 **Site Design.** Locate parking lots, driveways, loading, and service areas behind buildings, below grade, encapsulated within buildings, or on secondary frontages to reduce visual impact. Ensure that they are visually screened from public view with architectural elements and/or landscaping features. Where possible, access should be from streets that are not transit priority streets or key pedestrian or bicycle connecting streets to facilitate active pedestrian edges, reduce transit impacts, and improve bicycle safety.

DG-94 **Signage.** Provide clear signage for entrances to structured parking to facilitate ease of parking in mixed-use areas.

DG-95 **Bicycles.** Bicycle parking should be conveniently located, secure, weather protected, and conform to specific regulations in Planning Code Chapter 17.617.

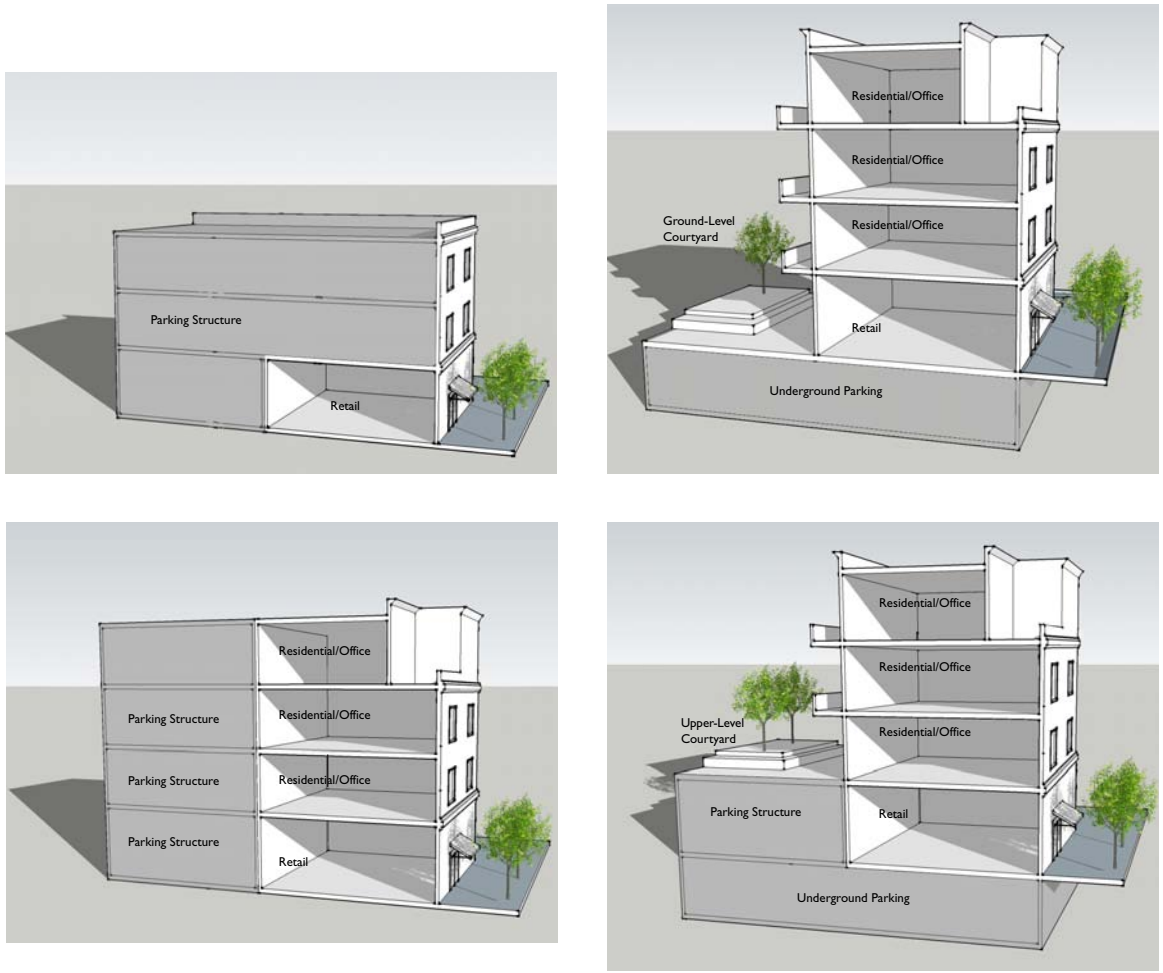
Parking Structures

DG-96 **Parking Structures.** Ensure that structured parking does not create a void in the pedestrian environment, by incorporating the following elements:

- Structured design must maintain an interaction between building function and the streetscape through fenestration, entries, and outdoor extension of uses.
- Provide pedestrian-oriented lighting along all streetfronts.
- Wrap the ground level of parking structures with active uses (commercial, residential, office, studios, etc.).
- Where active uses are not required or feasible at the ground floor, design parking structures that face the street such that façades are architectural and attractive, cars are screened, and sloped floors are not expressed on the exterior elevations. Provide horizontally aligned openings even where parking structure floors are sloped.

Design parking structures with façades that are architectural and attractive (DG-96 top). Wrap the ground level of parking structures with active uses (DG-96 middle). Accommodate pedestrians with pedestrian-only pathways through parking areas (DG-100 bottom).

Figure 11: PARKING STRUCTURE ENCAPSULATION



On sites that are half a block or greater (30,000 square feet or greater) in size, at least 50 percent of the above grade parking should be encapsulated, or wrapped so that the parking area is not apparent from the public right-of-way (DG-97).

- When parking structure entrances face the street, the width of portions visible from the public right of way should generally not exceed 25 feet.

DG-97 **Encapsulation.** On sites that are half a block or greater (30,000 square feet or greater) in size, at least 50 percent of the above grade parking should be encapsulated, or wrapped so that the parking area is not apparent from the public right-of-way, as shown in Figure 11.

DG-98 **Integral Design.** Design all visible structured parking as an integral part of the project it serves, consistent in style and materials with the balance of the project. Design parking structure façades as extensions of adjacent multistory buildings:

- Provide at least the same architectural quality to the parking façade as the façade of the rest of the building.
- Employ the same pattern or cadence of windows and massing as in adjoining or adjacent buildings.
- Relate the materials of the parking façade to the rest of the building or alternatively, use contrasting, high-quality materials to create an architectural feature or generate a multi-layered façade (for example glass or decorative screens).
- Place accent landscaping on the parking façade that is compatible with the building design. Landscaping compatible with building design may also be used as screening.
- Avoid continuous horizontal building openings and blank flat concrete façades.

DG-99 **Pedestrian Access.** Stair towers and pedestrian entries into parking structures should be emphasized as identifying architectural elements and located adjacent to public streets, along major pedestrian connections, and close to active ground floor uses. They should be free of visual obstruction to promote a feeling of security and comfort and to minimize conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.

DG-100 **Pedestrian Pathways.** Accommodate pedestrians with pedestrian-only pathways through parking lot areas. Clearly mark and connect these areas to public sidewalks with continuous pavement, pavers, or specially-painted crosswalks.

DG-101 **Façade Design.** To enhance the appearance of parking structures, consider using the following façade treatments:

- Living walls or landscaping;
- Awnings, arcades, trellises, or porticos along street-facing façades and pedestrian connections at parking structures; and
- High-quality and multi-layered façades, such as glass, perforated metal, or decorative screens, as façade treatments.

DG-102 **Lighting.** Ensure adequate lighting along garage façades to improve visibility and pedestrian safety, but shield the street from interior garage lighting.

DG-103 **Parking Podiums.** The height of the stoop/parking podium facing streets for multi-family residential buildings should be limited to a maximum of five feet above grade. Parking podiums should be screened with stoops, stairs, ornamental screens, and landscaping.

Surface Parking

DG-104 **Surface Parking.** Surface parking lots should be considered temporary uses, with new buildings and structured or underground parking planned for the long-term.

DG-105 **Sustainable Parking Design.** Design surface lots to incorporate trees for shading and permeable surfaces to minimize stormwater runoff. Consider use of motion-sensor lighting in some areas to reduce energy use.

DG-106 **Perimeter Landscaping.** A landscaped area at least five feet wide should be provided between any surface parking area and any property line adjacent to a public right-of-way.

DG-107 **Lighting.** Ensure adequate lighting of parking lots to improve visibility and pedestrian safety. Ensure that parking lot lighting consist of frequently spaced lights, no more than 15 feet tall, rather than a few tall bright lights.

Utilities

DG-108 **Location of Utilities.** Utility boxes, transformers, and lines should be undergrounded wherever possible, or located outside of the pedestrian pathway in order to provide unobstructed walkways and views.

DG-109 **Undergrounding.** Support local utility providers in the undergrounding of utilities. Work with PG&E and other public agencies to underground existing overhead utility lines.

Stormwater Management

DG-110 **Tree Planting and Preservation.** Tree planting and preservation should be encouraged along streets and within private property for new developments to enhance livability. Trees perform several important functions, including reducing runoff, improving water and air quality, mitigating the heat island effect, reducing noise, and elevating the character of a place. In particular, consider the following:

- Along with street trees, tree planting within properties should be encouraged particularly along parking lots. Tree planting should also be encouraged within setbacks, buffers, courtyards and other spaces within private property.
- During the design phase, work with project applicants to preserve significant on-site trees. During construction, ensure that remaining trees are protected.

DG-111 **Structural Soils.** Structural soils may be utilized to provide spaces more conducive to tree and root growth while also increasing stormwater-holding capacity. Structural soils create a load-bearing medium that has a greater ability to maintain necessary voids for root growth, air circulation and stormwater containment in more urban conditions.

Where planting space available for trees is constrained, consider using engineered products such as root barriers and structural soils to greatly increase the success rate and life span of new and

existing trees or using large containerized bio-retention gardens that receive and treat stormwater.

DG-112 **Green Roofs.** Incorporate intensive green roofs with usable open space and extensive green roofs wherever practicable. Green roofs can provide multiple benefits in the Lake Merritt Planning Area, where an extensive percentage of the area is impervious. These include stormwater benefits and reduced heating and cooling costs, as well as open space for users.

DG-113 **Bio-Retention.** Bio-retention facilities slow and treat stormwater by temporarily retaining it using soil, vegetation, hardscape elements and other materials to support and enhance the infiltration and bioremediation processes. Bio-retention facilities include artificial wetlands, swales, rain gardens, and flow-through planters. Consider the following:

- Incorporate bio-retention facilities in projects and particularly in communal open spaces where they can provide habitat and aesthetic value.
- To prevent clogging by construction debris, these facilities should be built last or runoff should be diverted around them until two months after construction is completed.

DG-114 **Bio-Filtration.** Incorporate bio-filtration facilities into surface parking lots and other large, paved circulation, service and storage areas. Bio-filtration facilities filter runoff through soils and plant material to remove suspended sediments. The design solutions in this category differ from bio-retention facilities in that their primary purpose is usually to convey stormwater rather than to retain or store it. Often, bio-filtration facilities can be used to pre-treat runoff before it enters bio-retention facilities or infiltration basins/trenches, which require low sediment loads to prevent clogging. Bio-filtration facilities include grass filter strips and vegetated swales.

DG-115 **Infiltration.** Review the potential to incorporate infiltration capacity into the design of street tree trenches. Infiltration facilities slow and filter runoff, improving the water quality and reducing the volume of runoff leaving the site. Infiltration trenches and basins can be designed with larger reservoirs and some degree of exfiltration to compensate for compacted soils. Infiltration facilities include infiltration basins, trenches, sand filters, and French drains.

DG-116 **Permeable Paving.** Permeable paving is used to reduce runoff and imitate the natural process of stormwater infiltration into the soil. Consider the following:

- The use of permeable paving to reduce surface run-off is encouraged wherever feasible for parking stalls, plazas and courtyards.
- Where possible, drainage should be directed to planting areas to maximize percolation.

4 Streetscape Design Guidelines

Streetscape elements create the environment that lends Chinatown excitement and allure. They provide the setting for vibrant pedestrian life and encourage people to linger, explore and connect with others in Chinatown. Banners announce cultural events and neighborhood celebrations, paving materials and patterns encourage passersby to linger and explore, trees and plantings provide shade and texture, and street lighting casts a warm and inviting glow on the sidewalks at night.

Any improvement to the public right-of-way that affects the design, operation or maintenance of public systems must be consistent with these recommendations and must be reviewed and approved by the City's Public Works Agency.

General

DG-117 Walkability. Foster a walkable, accessible, and safe street environment that connects people to transit, housing, employment, and major destinations in the Planning Area.

DG-118 Pedestrian Comfort. Design streetscapes for pedestrian comfort with wide sidewalks and amenities for pedestrians such as comfortable street furnishings, sufficient and attractive pedestrian-oriented lighting, and street trees for shading and aesthetics.

DG-119 Bicyclist Comfort. Design streetscapes for bicycle comfort on streets identified in Figure 6.6 with bike lanes or sharrows and amenities for cyclists such as bike racks, sufficient and attractive lighting, and street trees for shading and aesthetics.

DG-120 Transit Priority Streets. Consider the following on Transit Priority Streets in order to ensure quality bus service and access.

- Design buildings to minimize driveways to limit conflicts with bus service.
- Consider additional setbacks for new buildings where additional sidewalk width is needed to accommodate bus shelters.
- Design bus bulbs to aid boarding and exit from buses, and design pedestrian corner bulb-outs to not interfere with bus operations.
- Maintain parallel on-street parking (rather than angled parking).

DG-121 Traffic Calming. Provide curb bulb-outs at street corners and mid-block crossings to calm traffic, heighten pedestrian visibility and comfort, and reduce crossing distance where most needed.

DG-122 Consistent Street Design. Ensure that street improvements in historic districts complement historic buildings as part of a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Lighting

DG-123 Lighting and Safety. All public spaces, including streets, open spaces, parking lots, transit waiting areas, and building entrances, should be well-lit and designed for high visibility to ensure personal safety and comfort. Lighting should comply with CPTED strategies.

DG-124 Pedestrian-Oriented Lighting. Provide continuous pedestrian-oriented street lighting throughout the Planning Area, to increase illumination on the sidewalks, increase pedestrian comfort, and improve safety. Lighting should meet the following guidelines:

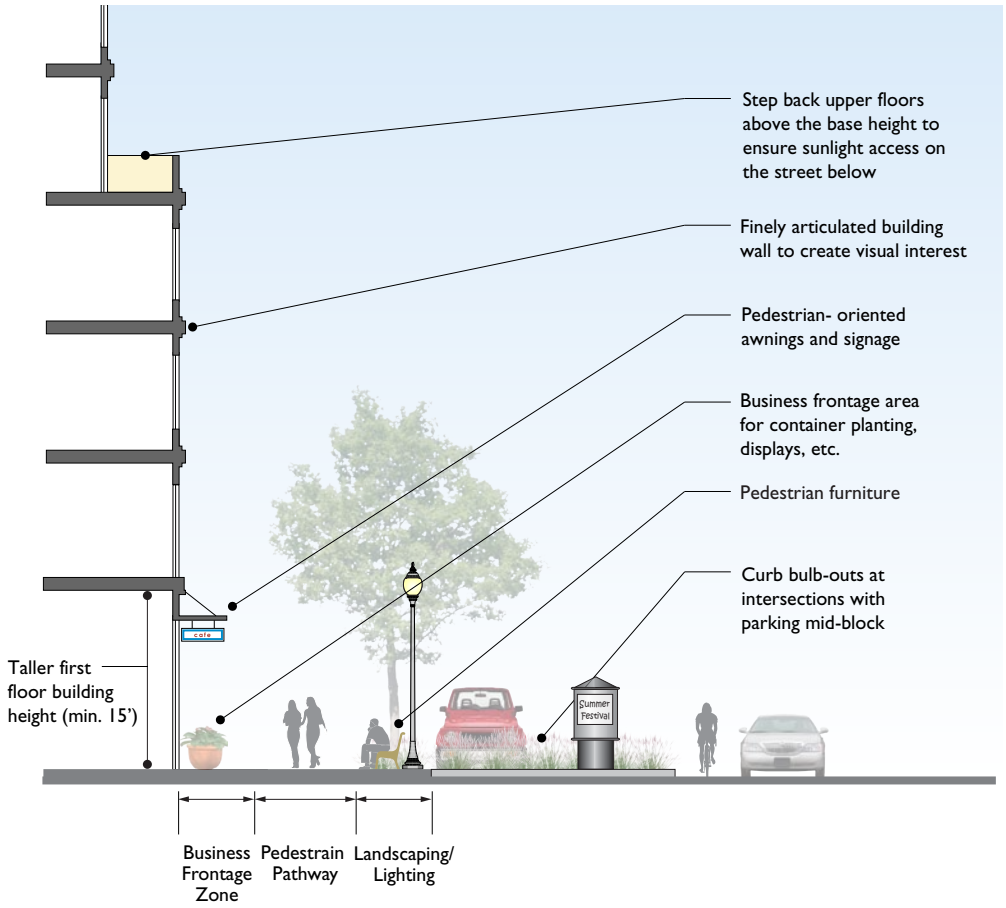
- Decorative streetlights scaled for pedestrian comfort.
- Spacing of lights should be approximately 20 to 40 feet on center; 50 feet on center is acceptable if a lower-cost, reduced-impact spacing is necessary.
- Use long-life lamp bulbs.
- Streetlight luminaries should be deeply recessed, "sharp cutoff" types.
- House-side shields should be specified for locations where the streetlight luminaries may inadvertently cast light on the windows of residences or restaurants.
- Streetlight design should be decorative, incorporating design elements that are sympathetic in style to traditional Chinatown architecture and storefront character. For instance, a version of the Lake Merritt decorative post-top streetlight, painted special colors for Chinatown, may serve this purpose.

Sidewalks

DG-125 Sidewalk Elements. Sidewalk widths should in general be twelve feet. Note that a building setback to widen the sidewalk can be required as a condition of approval for new development. The following three components should be considered in the design of the sidewalk area, as shown in Figure 12:

- Business Frontage Zone: This area is along Active Ground Floor Use streets, located furthest from the curb, and provides accessibility and visibility between buildings and the street. This area should be a minimum of two feet, and may include space for displays (e.g., produce stands), outdoor dining, container plantings, etc.
- Pedestrian Pathway Zone: This middle area is the unobstructed path of travel for pedestrians. An eight foot unobstructed pedestrian pathway is desired, and the minimum required unobstructed pedestrian pathway is 5.5 feet. This effective width should be straight and all street furniture should be at the street edge.
- Landscaping/Street Furniture Zone: The area closest to the curb should provide a four to six foot space for pedestrian-oriented lighting, street trees, landscaping, bus stops, street signs, benches, trash/recycle bins, bicycle parking, and other street furniture. This area also represents the buffer between parking or driving/biking lanes and the pedestrian pathway.

Figure 12: SIDEWALK ELEMENTS



Sidewalk elements should include a business frontage zone, pedestrian pathway zone, and landscape/street furniture zone. A five foot minimum and eight foot desired unobstructed pedestrian path should be maintained (DG-125).

DG-126 **Key Pedestrian Streets.** Key Pedestrian Streets, including 8th, 9th, Franklin, Harrison, Webster, Madison, and Oak Streets, should be designed to provide focus to the neighborhoods, and serve as activity spines. These streets should be characterized by as many of the following traits as possible:

- Well-lighted sidewalks with pedestrian-oriented lighting;
- Wide sidewalks;
- Outdoor café and restaurant seating, where sidewalk width permits;
- Consistent street tree species;
- Consistent street furnishings, lighting fixtures, and specialty planting (planters, etc.);
- Emphasis of gateways with public art, special signage, banners, and landscaping;
- Visually highlighted crosswalks with a change in paving material or striping, signage, and/or signalization;
- Wayfinding signs, banners, and flags;
- Benches and game tables that provides spaces for gathering;
- Curb bulb-outs at key intersections.

DG-127 **14th Street.** Establish 14th Street as a ceremonial street linking Frank Ogawa Plaza at the City Center to Lake Merritt, by implementing special pedestrian-oriented streetscape improvements, which may include special lighting that complements Lake Merritt's necklace of lights, special plantings, special sidewalk paving treatment, and/or distinctive street furniture.

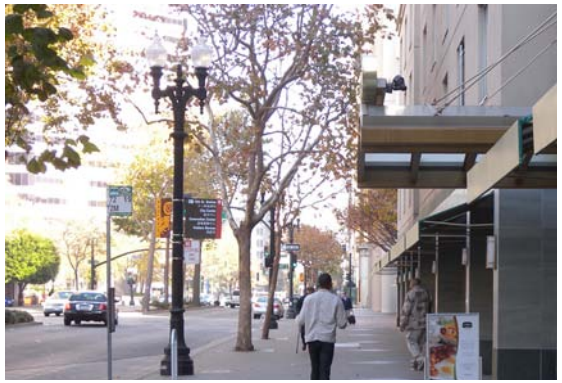
DG-128 **Connector/Green Streets.** Connector/Green Streets include 14th, Oak, 10th and 7th Streets. These streets should be designed as public spaces, offering opportunities for community gathering, strolling, lingering, sitting, and jogging. They should be distinguished by elements such as:

- Well-lighted sidewalks with pedestrian-oriented lighting;
- Additional trees and plantings;
- Wide sidewalks, including consideration of the needs of walkers;
- Places to linger, sit and contemplate;
- Places for public art;
- Widened sidewalk with enhanced landscaping;
- Bicycle facilities.

DG-129 **Special Paving.** Employ special paving treatments to improve pedestrian crossings:

- Paving at expanded sidewalk corners ("bulb-outs"): Colored and decoratively scored concrete, to match or complement the central "corridor" of the mid-block sidewalk paving.
- Intersection paving at scramble intersections to mark both the diagonal and the perpendicular pedestrian crosswalk areas.
- Paving on festival streets to differentiate them as special shared streets.

DG-130 **Traffic Signal Poles:** A cast decorative base may be added to existing traffic poles, matching new streetlights as closely as possible.



Improved pedestrian comforts includes calmed traffic, improved street crossings, and street trees for shade (DG-126 top). Street lighting should build on the existing scheme used in Chinatown (DG-133 middle) with new compatible features incorporated as desired (DG-133 bottom).

DG-131 Furnishings: Street furnishings may be considered for the additional space provided at intersections by the sidewalk bulb-outs in order to provide pedestrian amenities. These furnishings may include:

- Architectural kiosks which display a map and directory of Chinatown businesses on one side and a controlled, changeable display panel for community events posters on the other side to provide guidance to new visitors and customers.
- Permanent historical markers.
- Public art elements.
- Seating.
- Game tables (i.e., possibly Chinese chess for seniors), where there is sufficient space.
- Trash and recycling receptacles.

DG-132 Vending: Street vending displays shall adhere to the following design guidelines:

- The finish materials used for display merchandise must be smooth, nonabsorbent and cleanable.
- Merchants must be responsible for making sure that all activities on the sidewalk stay within the approved area and maintenance of the storefront, exterior walls, sidewalk and gutter in a clean condition at all times. Sidewalks shall be washed daily at locations with food displays and as needed at others.
- All movable display stands shall be promptly removed from the sidewalk in accordance with approved time of operation every day.

Wayfinding and Gateways

DG-133 Wayfinding and Signage System. Expand the existing bilingual wayfinding and signage system in the Chinatown core to the rest of the Planning Area that ensures that residents, workers, and visitors can easily navigate the area:

- Work closely with the Chinatown Coalition, BART, the Oakland Museum of California, and Laney College to identify locations for expansion of the existing wayfinding system throughout the Planning Area. Identify any desired new desired design elements to incorporate into the existing system.
- Supplement signage and banners with public art, landscaping, and distinctive lighting and street furniture to reinforce the neighborhood identity.
- Ensure that the system identifies key entrance points and connections within the City and to the Chinatown core. Design elements implemented at entrance points should incorporate clear and attractive signage, significant landscaping, public art, and lighting elements to create a sense of entry and neighborhood character.
- Ensure wayfinding and signage is reflective of the culture and heritage of Chinatown.

- Major destinations for directional signage should include the Chinatown core, Lake Merritt BART Station, and 12th Street BART Station, Pacific Renaissance Plaza, Lincoln Square Park, Madison Square Park, Laney College, the Oakland Museum of California, and Lake Merritt.
- Incorporate historical and cultural destinations into the wayfinding system.
- Major wayfinding elements such as kiosks should be located at key public destinations, including the Lake Merritt BART Station, Lincoln Square Park, entrances to Laney College, and in the core of Chinatown to help orient visitors.

DG-134 **Chinatown Gateway.** Work closely with the community to identify gateways to the Chinatown core with signage and public art that identifies the unique and vibrant community and retail district, to help orient and greet visitors. Seek a public art installation as a gateway that consists of entryways and consistent elements throughout the neighborhood that celebrates the existing and cultural history of the neighborhood. This should be coordinated with the wayfinding system.

DG-135 **Eastlake Gateway.** Ensure public realm improvements and landmark building design establish a gateway effect at 1st Avenue and East 12th Street.

Street Trees

DG-136 **Street Trees:** Provide street trees throughout the Planning Area, taking into account the following considerations:

- Deciduous tree species should be carefully selected to provide visibility between street and storefront, to reflect the cultural heritage of Chinatown, and to enable sunlight to filter through along most streets, especially in the winter, while providing shade during summer.
- Tree spacing may vary from 20 to 50 feet on center.
- Trees should have flush-mounted grates and matching guards.
- Landscaping should not block street lighting lampposts or illumination.
- Priority locations for new street trees are on Green Streets and Key Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections (10th, 9th, 8th, Franklin, Webster, Harrison, Oak and Madison Streets).
- Minimize encroachment of tree wells on the usable sidewalk width by specifying rectangular tree wells with the long side parallel to the curb line.

5 Open Space Design Guidelines

Open Space Guidelines

As part of revising the Oakland Planning Code to implement the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan, the City should provide new open space standards to apply to parks and publicy-accessible open space in the Planning Area. Open space standards should be based on the guidance provided by policies in the OSCAR and other planning documents, as well as on "best practices" embodied by the guidelines that follow.

DG-137 Sun Exposure. Locate open space along the east, west, or south side of blocks to maximize exposure to the sun, while protecting from wind. Ensure there are shaded and sheltered areas in addition to full sun areas.

DG-138 Open Space Location. Locate publicly accessible open space near the center of activity nodes or buildings and along pedestrian connections to encourage a variety of spillover activities and facilitate pedestrian access.

DG-139 Visual Access. Design open space to be visually accessible from the street, by highlighting views of the open space, installing signage, etc. Design open space that fronts the sidewalk to be primarily open and free of walls or other obstructions (not including trees, lights, low bollards and steps).

DG-140 Physical access. Design open space to be physically accessible from the street and designed for public use. Ensure that the grade of an open space is not more than three feet above or below the sidewalk grade. Use landscaping strategically to identify pedestrian entrances and articulate edges for plazas and courtyards.

DG-141 Maintenance. Ensure that parks are clean and well-maintained. Privately owned open spaces should be cleaned and maintained by the property owner.

DG-142 Amenities. Provide amenities for public use, including ample seating, which can be comprised of benches, seating walls, and moveable seating; trees and landscaping; and shaded and sheltered areas, in addition to areas with full sun access.

DG-143 Surfaces. Provide a surface that allows convenient use for outdoor enjoyment and/or recreation for all ages. Such surface may be any practicable combination of lawn, garden, flagstone, wood planking, concrete, or other serviceable, dust-free surfacing. Slope should not exceed 10 percent.

DG-144 Landscape Materials. Use low-maintenance landscape materials that are climate appropriate, drought-resistant, and require minimal irrigation (See Alameda County's Bay-Friendly Landscaping guidelines).

Open Spaces should be visible and accessible from the street (DG-140 top). Open spaces should be designed with amenities and for enjoyment by people of all ages (DG-142, DG-146 middle). Lake Merritt Channel improvements should follow Bay Conservation Development Commission guidelines (DG-153 bottom).

DG-145 **High quality materials.** Use high-quality, durable materials that are cost-effective in the long-term. To the extent feasible, standardize the amenities in publicly accessible open space (e.g. benches and trash cans), and incorporate technology (e.g. solar trash compactors, moisture-sensing sprinklers) to minimize costs and make maintenance and repairs more efficient.

DG-146 **Multigenerational Facilities.** Provide amenities and programs for a variety of users (e.g. seniors, children, and teenagers) at different times of day and evening. Design should include minimal level changes and at-grade or ramped entries.

DG-147 **Public Art and Programming.** Provide public art and programming that reflect the culture of the community (e.g. intergenerational and multi-cultural activities).

DG-148 **Active uses in open spaces.** Encourage a variety of activities, programs, and events in open spaces to promote active uses, such as open air cafés and food vendors. Vendors should generally not occupy more than 20 percent of the total area of the open space. Also, provide opportunities for quiet passive recreation.

DG-149 **Stormwater management.** Use stormwater management systems, bioswales and rain gardens in street medians or landscape buffers. Employ moisture-sensitive irrigation systems.

DG-150 **Lighting.** Maximize lighting for safety, especially along connections between transit facilities, in public plazas, pedestrian-oriented destinations, parking areas, and other major public destinations. Consider placement of security cameras in areas that may have limited visibility.

DG-151 **Private Rooftop Space.** Rooftop open spaces may serve as private open space.

DG-152 **Public Rooftop Space.** Rooftops may provide up to 50 percent of public open space. If rooftop space is used for public open space, it must be designed and managed so that it is usable and accessible to the public.

Shoreline Guidelines

DG-153 **Lake Merritt Channel open space guidelines.** Incorporate the following elements into the design of new open spaces along the Lake Merritt Channel in order to ensure that new open spaces are publicly accessible:[1]

- Ensure safety and security.
- Design for a wide range of users and relate to adjacent uses.
- Design, build, and maintain in a manner that indicates the public character of the space.
- Provide public amenities, such as trails, benches, play opportunities, trash containers, drinking fountains, lighting and restrooms that are designed for different ages, interests and physical abilities.
- Maintain and enhance the visual quality of the shoreline and adjacent developments by providing visual interest and architectural variety in massing and height to new buildings along the shoreline.
- Ensure that new public access areas are clearly connected to public rights-of-way, such as streets and sidewalks, are served by public transit, and are connected to adjacent public access or recreation areas.
- Employ appropriate siting, design and management strategies (such as buffers or use restrictions) to reduce or prevent adverse human and wildlife interactions.
- Balance the needs of wildlife and people on an area wide scale, where possible.

1 San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, "Shoreline Spaces: Public Access Design Guidelines for the San Francisco Bay, April 2005.

Green roofs, permeable paving, and on-site energy generation are all components of sustainable building design.

6 Sustainability and Green Building

Green building focuses on a whole systems and environmentally beneficial approach to the siting, orientation, design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition of buildings and landscapes. In particular, green building strategies include efficiencies in structure design, energy usage, and water consumption; the reduction of waste and the incorporation of ecologically appropriate, durable materials; improving and maintaining indoor environmental quality for the comfort and health of occupants; and the optimization of operations and maintenance systems. Benefits of green building include natural resource conservation, energy efficiency, improved health of employees and residents, and increased economic vitality.

The City of Oakland has made significant efforts in advancing city policies and programs geared for a more sustainable future. Starting in 1998, the City adopted the Sustainable Community Development Initiative, and subsequently, the City Council has adopted various policies in support the initiative. These efforts, along with larger statewide efforts to create a more sustainable California, have resulted in various regulations related to building design, which projects throughout the city and state must now comply with.

An overview of current ordinances and programs that affect new building construction, adaptive reuse, and certain additions and alterations that will affect projects within the city, including the Planning Area, follows.

City of Oakland Green Building Ordinance

In October of 2010, the city adopted the Green Building Ordinance for Private Development Projects. The ordinance affects a wide range of projects from new construction of single- and multi-family residential as well as non-residential projects, additions and alterations, modifications or demolition of historic resources, construction of affordable housing and mixed-use projects, as well as projects requiring a landscape plan. Projects that are affected based on defined thresholds in the ordinance include:

- Residential and non-residential new construction, additions and alterations;
- Removal of a historic resource and new construction;
- Historic residential and non-residential additions and alterations;
- Mixed use construction; and
- Construction requiring a landscape plan

Certain types of projects are required to receive certification through a non-governmental green rating agency, including:

- All new residential construction and residential additions or alterations over 1,000 square feet, certified through Built It Green's GreenPoint Rated program.
- All new non-residential construction and non-residential additions or alterations.

City resources are easily accessible to assist developers and property owners in complying with the Green Building Ordinance. In 2006, the city officially adopted a resolution to encourage the use of the Alameda County Residential Green Building Guidelines, USGBC's LEED Rating System for new commercial construction and remodeling, and Stop Waste's Bay Friendly Landscape Guidelines as official documents to guide development to facilitate approvals. Resources are provided at no cost. Further information and downloadable documents can be accessed from the city's website at http://www2.oaklandnet.com/GreenBuilding/index.htm.

CALGreen

In addition to Oakland's Green Building Ordinance, as of January 2011, new construction projects are required to comply with the California Green Building Standards Code also known as CALGreen. This first-in-the-nation mandatory Green Building Code (CALGreen), which acts like the state's building and energy regulatory codes, requires all new buildings in the State to be more energy efficient and environmentally responsible. CALGreen's comprehensive regulations include a mix of prescriptive and performance based standards that will achieve major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and water use to create a greener California. Like California's existing building code provisions that regulate all construction projects throughout the state, the mandatory CALGreen provisions will be inspected and verified by local and state building departments, thereby not adding certification costs to builders.

In addition, starting July 1, 2012, existing non-residential additions over 2,000 square feet and alterations with construction cost of greater than $500,000 will require compliance with CAL-Green. Further information is available through the California Building Standards Commision website: www.bsc.ca.gov/home/calgreen/aspx.

Construction and Demolition Ordinance

In July of 2000, the city adopted the Construction and Demolition Ordinance in order to achieve State and County waste reduction goals, and simultaneously encourage development and redevelopment at higher intensities and in hopes of supporting its efforts towards a more sustainable future. The ordinance promotes reusing, salvaging, and recycling of construction and demolition debris to conserve natural resources and reduce the need for landfill space as well as to stimulate markets for recycled materials, which may reduce construction costs related to debris disposal.

Projects affected meet one or more of the following criteria:

- New construction;
- Non-residential or apartment house (3+ units) demolition; and
- Non-residential or apartment house (3+ units) addition or alteration valued at or greater than $50,000 adjusted to year 2000 dollar values.

Documentation must be submitted calculating itemized and total volumes or weights of the material that is proposed for reuse or salvage, and that which is proposed for landfill by type of material, showing that at least 50 percent of the volume will be diverted. The proposal must be approved prior to obtaining a demolition and building permit. Follow up monitoring is performed through inspections and audits.

Recycling Space Allocation Ordinance

In June 1995, the city adopted the Recycling Space Allocation Requirements ordinance, which requires certain developments to provide space for the collection and loading of recyclable materials in conformance with the standards established by the Integrated Waste Management Board. Projects affected are required to provide adequate, accessible and convenient areas for collecting and loading recyclable materials. Depending on certain permit application submittal(s) criteria, projects affected may include:

- New construction of public facilities where solid waste is collected and loaded and improvements to existing areas where solid waste is collected and loaded;
- New construction of residential (5+ units) where solid waste is collected and loaded for five or more living units, and additions to existing residential (5+ units) adding 30 percent or more to the gross floor area;
- New construction of marinas, commercial and industrial uses and additions to existing commercial and industrial adding 30 percent or more to the gross floor area;
- Multi-tenanted residential, commercial and industrial uses where applications are submitted for the entire project or by a single tenant, which singly or collectively add 30 percent or more to the gross floor area.

Other Programs

GreenTRIP

GreenTRIP is a voluntary certification program run by TransForm, that rewards multi-family, mixed-use, in-fill projects that apply comprehensive strategies to reduce traffic and greenhouse gas emissions. Projects meeting GreenTRIP certification criteria provide appropriate amounts of parking and incentives for new residents to drive less and own fewer vehicles. By creating less driving and using less land for parking spaces, there's space freed up for services, shops and more affordable homes. Environmental and social outcomes for GreenTRIP projects are expected to include fewer miles of driving per day than the regional average, lower car ownership rates, and more affordable living that bring families savings on car ownership, free transit and carshare memberships.