

**City of Glendale**  
**Community Development Department**  
**Design Review Staff Report – Multi-Family Zoning and**  
**Objective Design Standards**

<b>Meeting/Decision Date:</b> January 25, 2024	<b>Address:</b> Multi-Family Zones Citywide
<b>Review Authority:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DRB <input type="checkbox"/> ADR <input type="checkbox"/> HPC <input type="checkbox"/> CC	<b>APN:</b> N/A
<b>Case Number:</b> TBD	<b>Applicant:</b> City of Glendale
<b>Prepared By:</b> Vilia Zemaitaitis, AICP, and Teresa Santilena, AICP	<b>Owner:</b> N/A

### **Project Summary**

To provide a presentation of proposed amendments to GMC Chapter 30.11 Residential Districts regarding multi-family zoning and objective design standards (ODS) for DRB's review and comment.

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### **Background**

Staff is presenting for DRB's review and comment a variety of site planning, building massing and scale, and architectural design concepts, along with proposed development standards for multi-family projects in multi-family zones. The new site planning and massing concepts were presented to City Council on November 14, 2023; their feedback has been incorporated into the current iteration. Additional details pertaining to building articulation and exterior materials are also included in this presentation to DRB. This report provides another opportunity for public feedback as well. Based on DRB's comments, staff will prepare code amendments to be brought before the Planning Commission, following public outreach, prior to returning to City Council for introduction and eventual adoption.

The following summarizes the history of the multi-family zoning and objective design standards:

In 2019, based on feedback from the public that the existing multi-family development standards often do not allow for projects to reach their maximum unit density potential, City Council directed staff to examine the multi-family standards for potential revisions. Such development-limiting standards for re-evaluation included: the current minimum interior setbacks, which result in a "wedding cake" massing; the two-story height limit for project sites less than 90' in width; and common open space requirements that restrict buildable area and tend to be met with often overlooked, unused pocket open space areas. The intent was that modification of these development standards would increase the likelihood of achieving maximum housing unit potential.

In 2020, the City Council accepted an SB 2 Planning Grant from the State of California to help fund local planning projects that streamline housing production and allocated a portion of the grant funds to Crandall Arambula (Consultant) to assist in preparing objective design and development standards for multi-family and mixed-use zones. Currently, the City utilizes design *guidelines* to assess projects, however, these guidelines

can be “subjective”, requiring personal interpretation of their meaning and application. This interpretation, in turn, can lead to a lengthy project review and approval process, and uncertainty for project applicants. Staff has been working with the Consultant to prepare and implement ODS for all multi-family residential projects, including modifications to the above mentioned zoning and development standards both in residential and commercial zones. These projects were also included in Glendale’s adopted and certified 2021-2029 Housing Element as part of a suite of zoning amendments aimed to remove constraints to a variety of housing types and to ensure that City standards and permitting requirements are in compliance with State law.

Specific recent State legislation promotes adoption of local objective design and development standards for review of multi-family housing applications. Such legislation includes:

- SB 35 Streamlined Affordable Housing, which requires approval of qualified housing projects based on objective regulatory standards;
- SB 167 Housing Accountability Act, which states that local governments may not deny, reduce density, or make infeasible housing projects that are consistent with objective design standards; and
- SB 330 Housing Crisis Act of 2019, which prohibits local jurisdictions from imposing or enforcing new design standards established on or after 1/1/2020 that are not objective.

This legislative focus on objective design and development standards is intended to help address the housing shortage within the State by streamlining the review process for multi-family residential projects to increase housing production and to decrease housing costs for residents. ODS would ensure a more efficient, predictable, and equitable path to obtaining planning approvals for a wide variety of development projects, especially for those including an affordable housing component. Such ODS are also a powerful tool that allows communities to respond to State housing laws that have reduced local control over development and provides an opportunity to ensure that the appearance of new development is compatible with the City’s vision for multi-family neighborhoods.

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#### **Staff Recommendation**

☐ Approve    ☐ Approve with Conditions    ☐ Return for Redesign    ☐ Deny

No action is required by the Design Review Board. However, staff is requesting comments from DRB and will forward those comments to the Planning Commission and City Council for their consideration.

#### **CEQA Status:**

☐ The project is exempt from CEQA review as a Class 1 “Existing Facilities” exemption pursuant to Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

☐ The project is exempt from CEQA review as a Class 3 “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” exemption pursuant to Section 15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

☒ Other: The proposed zoning code amendments will be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3),

which states the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects [that] have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The multi-family residential densities will not be changed, and the objective design standard amendments would not result in any environmental impacts. Future development projects subject to the proposed ordinance would be reviewed for potential environmental impacts.

## SUMMARY OF ZONING AND OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS:

The project consists of two parts: code amendments to the development standards for multi-family residential zoning and new ODS for multi-family development.

The first part, code amendments to the multi-family residential development standards, focuses on updates to existing residential district general development standards. The existing standards can be seen in the following table and proposed changes are expanded upon below

**GMC 30.11.030, Table 30.11-B**

Development Feature	Requirement by Zoning District			
	R-3050	R-2250	R-1650	R-1250
Minimum Lot Size	Minimum lot area and width required			
Area/Width	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Residential Density Maximum	1 dwelling unit per 3,050 sq. ft. of lot area.	1 dwelling unit for each 2,250 sq. ft. of lot area. On lots having a width of 90 feet or greater, there shall be not more than 1 dwelling unit for each 1,800 sq. ft. of lot area.	1 dwelling unit for each 1,650 sq. ft. of lot area. On lots having a width of 90 feet or greater, there shall be not more than 1 dwelling unit for each 1,320 sq. ft. of lot area.	1 dwelling unit for each 1,250 sq. ft. of lot area. On lots having a width of 90 feet or greater, there shall be not more than 1 dwelling unit for each 1,000 sq. ft. of lot area.
Floor Area Ratio Maximum	.65	.85	1.0	1.2
Lot Coverage (2)	50% maximum including all residential and accessory buildings			
Setbacks Required (2)	See Section 30.11.070 for setback exceptions			
Street Front	25 feet minimum	20 feet minimum and an average of 23 feet for any garage or first residential floor; not less than 23 feet and an average of 26 feet for the second and third residential floors (see Diagram 1 in Figure 30.11.030).		
Street Side	5 feet minimum and an average of 8 feet for the first residential floor; not less than 8 feet and an average of 11 feet for the second residential floor; and not less than 11 feet and an average of 14 feet for the third residential floor (see Diagram 2 in Figure 30.11.030).			
Interior	5 feet minimum and an average of 8 feet for the first residential floor; not less than 8 feet and an average of 11 feet for the second residential floor; and not less than 11 feet and an average of 14 feet for the third residential floor (see Diagram 2 in Figure 30.11.030). (1)			
Interior when abutting the ROS, R1R or R1 zones (excluding chimneys, railings and vents)	8 feet minimum and an average of 11 feet for the first residential floor; not less than 11 feet and an average of 14 feet for the second residential floor; and not less than 17 feet and an average of 20 feet for the third residential floor (see Diagram 3 in Figure 30.11.030). (1)			
Height Limits (2)(6)	Maximum of 3 stories and a maximum of 36 feet. (3) (4) (5) On lots having a lot width of 90 feet or less, a maximum of 2 stories and a maximum of 26 feet. (3) (4) (5)			
Accessory Buildings	12 feet, or 15 feet where a minimum roof pitch of 3 feet in 12 feet is provided, pursuant to the definition of height set forth in this title.			

<b>Accessory Structures</b>	15 feet pursuant to the definition of height set forth in this title.	
<b>Minimum Permanently Landscaped Open Space (2)</b>	30% of lot area. See Chapter 30.31 for additional requirements	25% of lot area. See Chapter 30.31 for additional requirements
<b>Parking and Loading</b>	As required by Chapter 30.32 (Parking and Loading)	

Notes: (1) For additions to existing dwelling units where only one (1) dwelling unit exists on the lot and for which a building permit was issued prior to December 14, 1995, see Section 30.11.070.

(2) For lot coverage, setback, height, and landscape open space requirements, see Section 30.30.050.

(3) Additional five (5) feet of height shall be permitted for any roofed area having a minimum pitch of three (3) feet in twelve (12) feet.

(4) Rooftop equipment shall not be included in the measurement of the vertical dimension provided that said equipment is fully screened by a roofed element of the building having a minimum pitch described herein.

(5) A mezzanine shall not be considered a story. See Chapter 30.70 (Definitions).

(6) For exceptions to height limits for wireless telecommunications facilities, see Chapter 30.48

### DENSITY:

No changes are proposed to the existing density (dwelling units per acre) limits.

Under the GMC density standards, the multi-family zone designation indicates the number of units permitted per square feet (SF) of lot area (i.e., 1 unit per 3,050 SF in R-3050, 1 unit per 2,250 SF for R-2250, 1 unit per 1,650 SF for R-1650, and 1 unit per 1,250 SF for R-1250). Except for the R-3050 zone, lots greater than 90 feet in width allow an increase in density– up to 24 du/ac in R-2250 (Medium Density Residential), 33 du/ac in R-1650 (Medium High Density Residential), and 43 du/ac in R-1250 (High Density Residential). To incentivize lot consolidation, more units within a larger project are allowed on a wider, larger lot. Based on the Density Bonus provisions and State law, additional density up to 50% is permitted depending on number of affordable units and levels of affordability.

### FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR):

No changes are proposed to the existing FAR limits at this time. Current FAR minimums are .65 in R-3050, .85 in R-2250, 1.0 in R-1650, and 1.2 in R-1250.

Increased FAR is required for projects between three and 10 units, per State statute (SB 478) and GMC 30.11.050.K (minimum density of 1.0 for projects three to seven units, and 1.25 for projects eight to 10 units in all multi-family zones). Additionally, Density Bonus projects may request to exceed the FAR limits.

### LOT COVERAGE:

Currently, the lot coverage requirement for all multi-family zoned properties is 50%. This 50% limit is appropriate for smaller scale projects in the R-3050 (Moderate Density) and R-2250 (Medium Density) zones that are typically adjacent to single family zones. The lot coverage in the R-1650 (Medium High Density) and R-1250 (High Density) zones could be slightly increased to permit greater maximization of the lot for residential development, as neighboring cities have permitted. For example, Burbank allows for 60% coverage for lots located within 500 feet of a single-family zoned property and 70% for lots located more than 500 feet from single-family zoned property. Staff is considering increasing the lot coverage limit for the higher density districts and welcomes feedback from DRB regarding this consideration.

## SETBACKS

The existing standards utilize minimum and average setback requirements which increase for each story of a multi-family building and are often criticized for resulting in “wedding cake” tiered massing. These standards will be updated to allow uniform minimum and/or average setback standards on all floors for the interior, street front and side street elevations. Such uniform minimum setbacks will create an overall building envelope that will then be layered with objective design standards to ensure modulation and articulation across the elevations to provide varying depth in building massing and allow for variation of architectural design. Additional setbacks and an increased step-back for the upper floor will be required for projects abutting single family zones.

## HEIGHT

The current height standards limit development to two stories and 26 feet in height for lots less than 90 feet in width (same lot width threshold as for density), and three stories and 36 feet in height on lots greater than 90 feet in width. An additional five feet of height is permitted to accommodate sloped roofs forms. To address the State’s requirements for Glendale’s adopted Housing Element, the two-story height limit is being eliminated; all multi-family residential projects will be allowed three stories by right. Staff is proposing an upper floor step-back requirement for all floors above the second floor for projects adjacent to single-family zones to ensure appropriate transitions and compatibility between multi-family and single-family zones.

## MINIMUM LANDSCAPING

Currently, 30% of lot area in the R-3050 zone and 25% of the lot area in the R-1650, R-2250 and R-1250 zones must be landscaped. This standard may be updated in conjunction with proposed changes to the percentage of the required common open space that must be landscaped.

## OPEN SPACE

Currently, 40 SF of private open space is required for each unit. The amount of common open space required per unit is tiered based on the number of units in the project – as the number of units increases, the amount of common open space per unit decreases. Specifically, 200 SF of common open space must be provided for the first 25 dwelling units on a lot, 150 SF of common space must be provided for the second 25 units on a lot, and 100 SF of common open space must be provided for each unit above 50 units. No change is proposed for the 40 SF private open space requirement. However, for projects with seven or fewer units, staff is proposing that a total minimum of 200 SF of private open space may be provided per unit in lieu of 40 SF of private open space and separate 200 SF of common open space per unit; a common open space area would not be required for projects seven units or less. Such private open space would be required to comply with private open space location and screening standards rather than common open space requirements. Also, new site planning concepts described below concentrate on locating the common open space on the ground floor to achieve building separation and break down building massing. These new concepts also modify the way the open space requirement is currently calculated by shifting away from a fixed number of square feet per unit to a percentage of the lot area.

## OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS (ODS)

The second piece of this project is the creation of ODS. These design standards have similar formatting and regulations as those in the Tropico Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning and the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). The standards also build upon the existing design guidelines for multi-family development (Comprehensive Design Guidelines: <https://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/community-development/planning/design-guidelines>), specifically Chapter 5 – Multi-Family and Mixed Use, which provide the basis for staff's and the Consultant's study. The existing City-adopted design guidelines language have been used as the basis for modifying the subjective language of the site planning, massing & scale, and design & detailing sections to objective language, wherever possible (i.e., "shall" as opposed to "should"). As per State law, only ODS will be included in the proposed updates.

One of the main goals for this report is to solicit DRB's feedback on several new site planning, massing & scale and architectural design element concepts. These concepts are highlighted below and will be presented in detail during the PowerPoint presentation.

### **Site Planning**

The first development standards' updates reflected in the objective design standards relate to site planning setbacks. The existing street front setback requirements (25' in the R-3050 zone and 20' minimum/23' average in the R-2250, R-1650, and R-1250 zones) are not proposed to change for the first floor. However, unlike the current standards which require additional setbacks on the upper floors, the proposed amendments would allow the first floor street front setback to be carried up to the second and third stories and additional street front setbacks for stories above. The proposed site planning concepts, however, create new standards for interior setbacks and open space requirements and incorporate additional standards for lots greater than 90' in width.

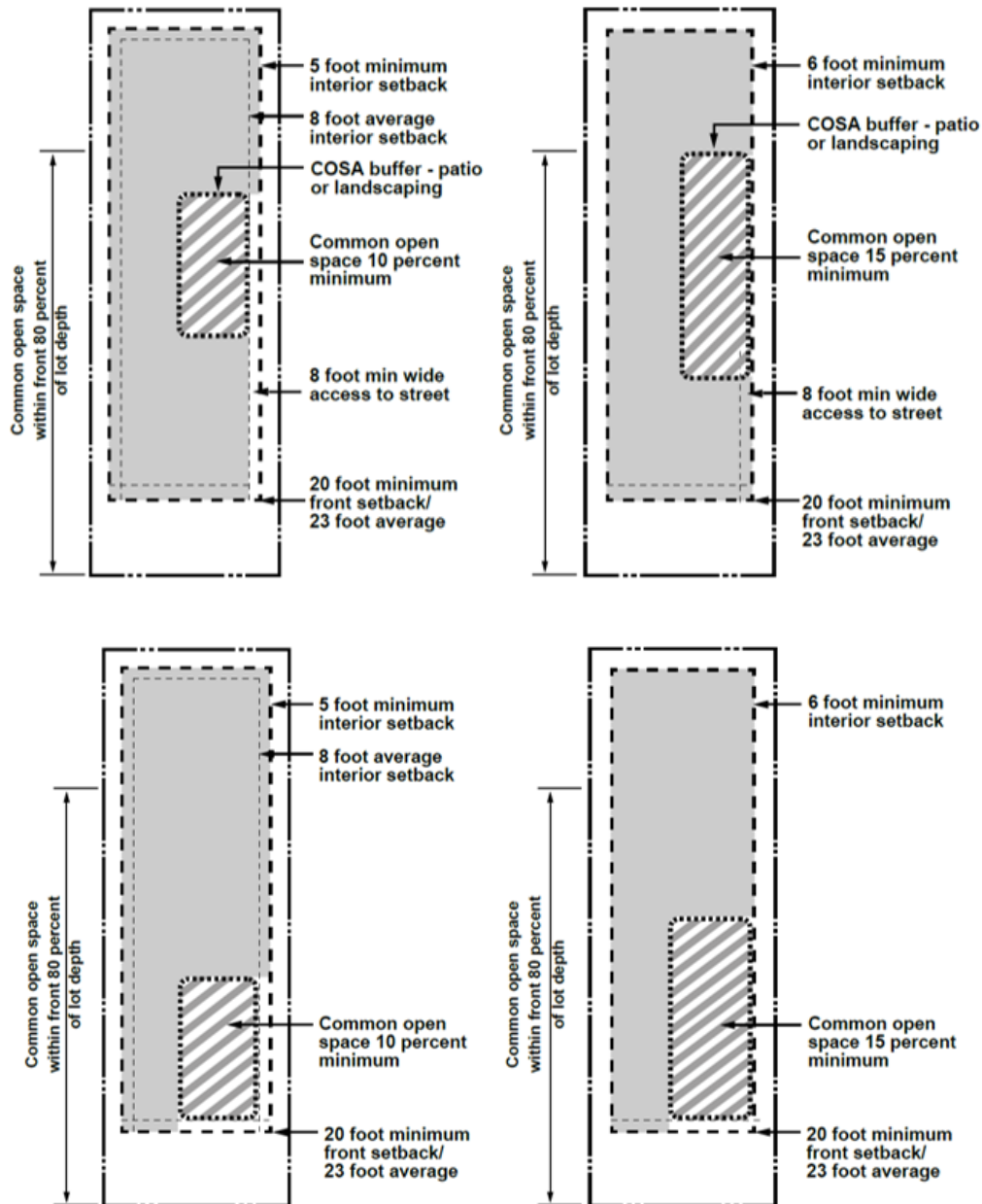
For projects greater than seven units, applicants would have two options to address Common Open Space Amenity (COSA) Areas depending upon the interior setbacks: 1) a 5' minimum, 8' average interior setback for all floors (this is based on the current interior setback requirements for the first floor of a multi-family building) with a COSA equal to a minimum of 10% of the lot size; or 2) a 6' fixed interior setback for all floors with a COSA requirement of a minimum of 15% of the lot size. In response to concerns that the existing standards often relegate common open space to the rear of the lot and are only used by a small percentage of residents, the proposed standards require that the COSA be located within the front 80% of the lot. Minimum COSA dimensions are 15' for lots that are 90' or less in width and 30' for lots greater than 90' in width.

The consultant has prepared models to assess the viability of these new setback and open space standards to determine the feasibility of the proposals on typical lots in Glendale. The massing models have demonstrated that the proposed concepts are feasible, workable, and at the same time allow applicants to develop the maximum number of residential units on the multi-family zoned lots.

The graphics on the next few pages illustrate how these new site planning standards would be applied for typical lots in Glendale, on parcels measuring 50' wide by 150' deep and 100' wide by 150' deep.

## Lot width 90 feet or less

Option 1 - min/ave setbacks w/ 10% COSA    Option 2 - fixed setback with 15% COSA



### KEY

- Permitted building area
- Minimum required courtyard area (Minimum width 15 feet)
- Minimum interior setback
- Average interior setback

Additional site planning-related topics that will be addressed by the objective design standards include parking and vehicular access; landscape and hardscape design; walls, fences, and gates; utilities and mechanical equipment; outdoor lighting; and trash collection areas.

## **Building Massing & Scale**

The proposed massing and scale standards aim to ensure that new projects are compatible with existing neighborhood development in terms of scale and are sufficiently modulated so as not to be boxy building forms. Standards for massing would regulate modulation of the building both horizontally, with recesses and/or projections across façade elevations, and vertically, in terms of height.

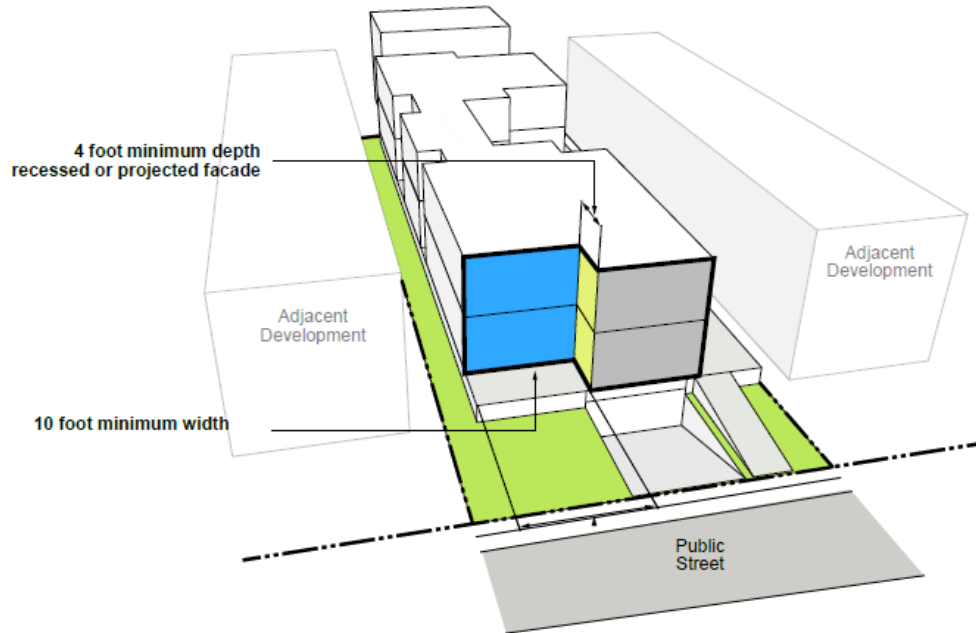
### **Horizontal Modulation**

The horizontal modulation concepts would require that building facades be broken into segments to avoid buildings with long, blank walls. Therefore, any façade on any elevation that is 40' or greater in length would be required to be composed of a minimum of two (2) segments, while facades 100' or greater in length would be required to be composed of a minimum of three (3) segments. Segments would be created through the use of building wall recesses and/or projections.

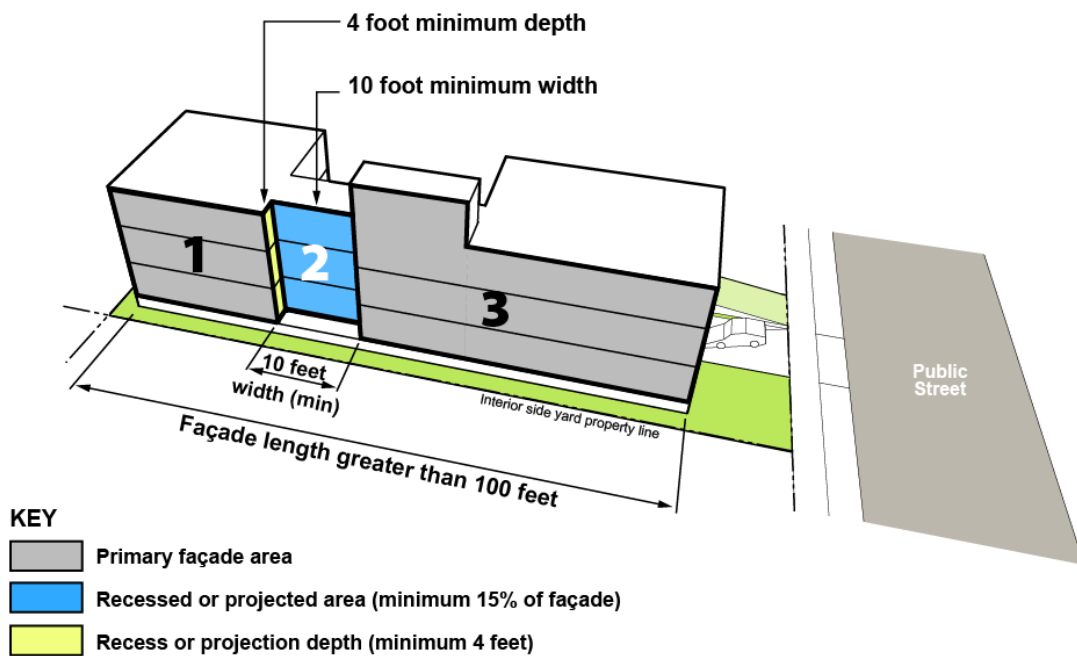
In cases where horizontal modulation is required, a minimum of 15% of the total façade area is required to be recessed or projected. Each recess or projection will be a minimum of four (4) feet deep and will extend from the finished grade to the top of the building wall or parapet. At least one of the following building elements will be required to be modulated: circulation between floors (stairwells and elevators), residential lobbies, or individual residential entries, or site courtyards or forecourts

The graphics below demonstrate how horizontal modulation will break up building massing.

## Horizontal Modulation for façade length greater than 40'

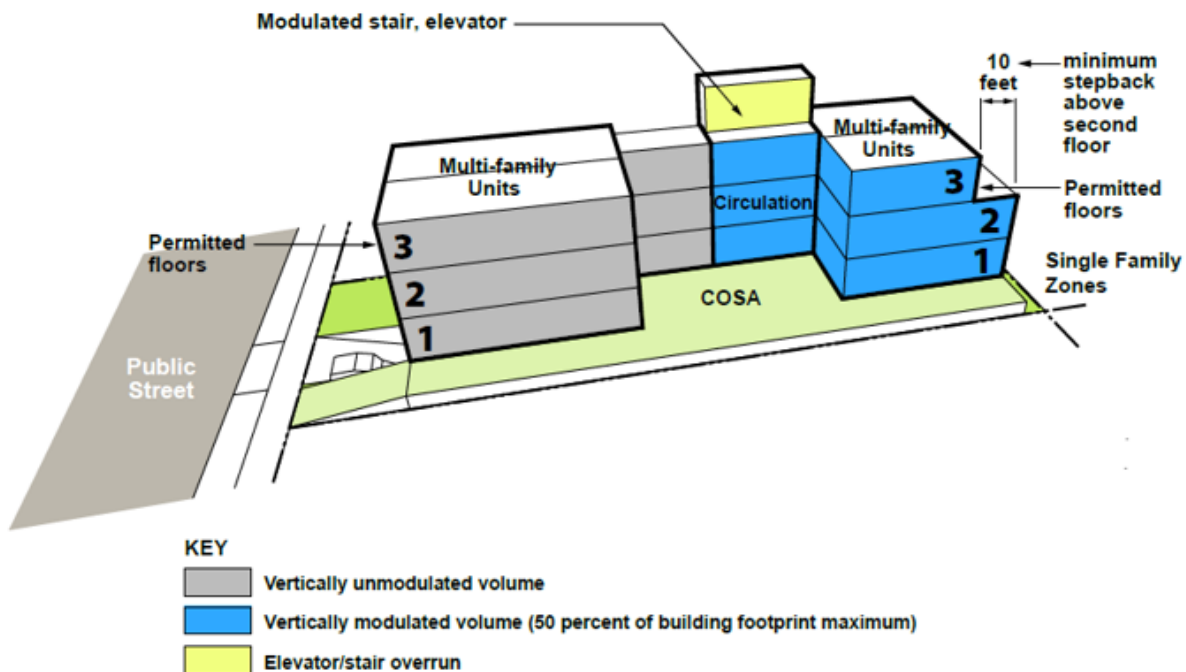


## Horizontal Modulation for façade length greater than 100'



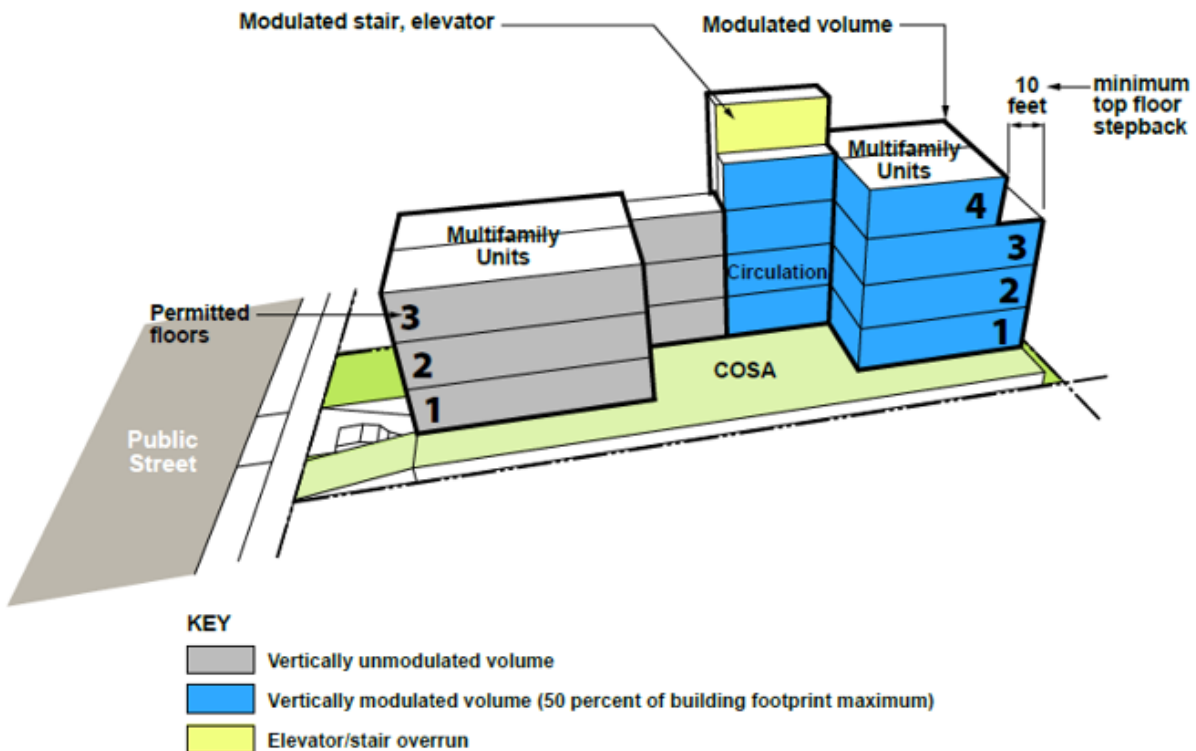
## Vertical Modulation

Since all multi-family residential projects will now be permitted to be three stories by right, vertical modulation standards will be applied to ensure that adjacent single-family zones are given some relief. As such, any portion of a multi-family building that is within eight feet of a single family zone on an interior property line and exceeds three stories or 41 feet in height will be required to provide a 10-foot stepback for the top floor. Additionally, rooftop open space will be prohibited adjacent to single-family zone designations. Finally, elevator shafts and roof top stairwells will be permitted to exceed the maximum height limits by 15 feet.



Given that any multi-family residential project with eight units or more must comply with the City's inclusionary housing ordinance and must provide 15% affordable housing units, it is important to anticipate Density Bonus projects within the objective design standards. Therefore, buildings proposed to be greater than three stories or 41 feet in height will be required to incorporate additional vertical modulation into the architectural design. For these density bonus projects, the additional height will be required to be located within the rear 50% of the building footprint and an additional stepback will be required along the rear of the upper story. If a Density Bonus project proposes to exceed three stories in height within the front 50% of the building footprint, an additional stepback will be required on all building planes. Below is an example of massing for a Density Bonus project on a lot less than 90 feet in width.

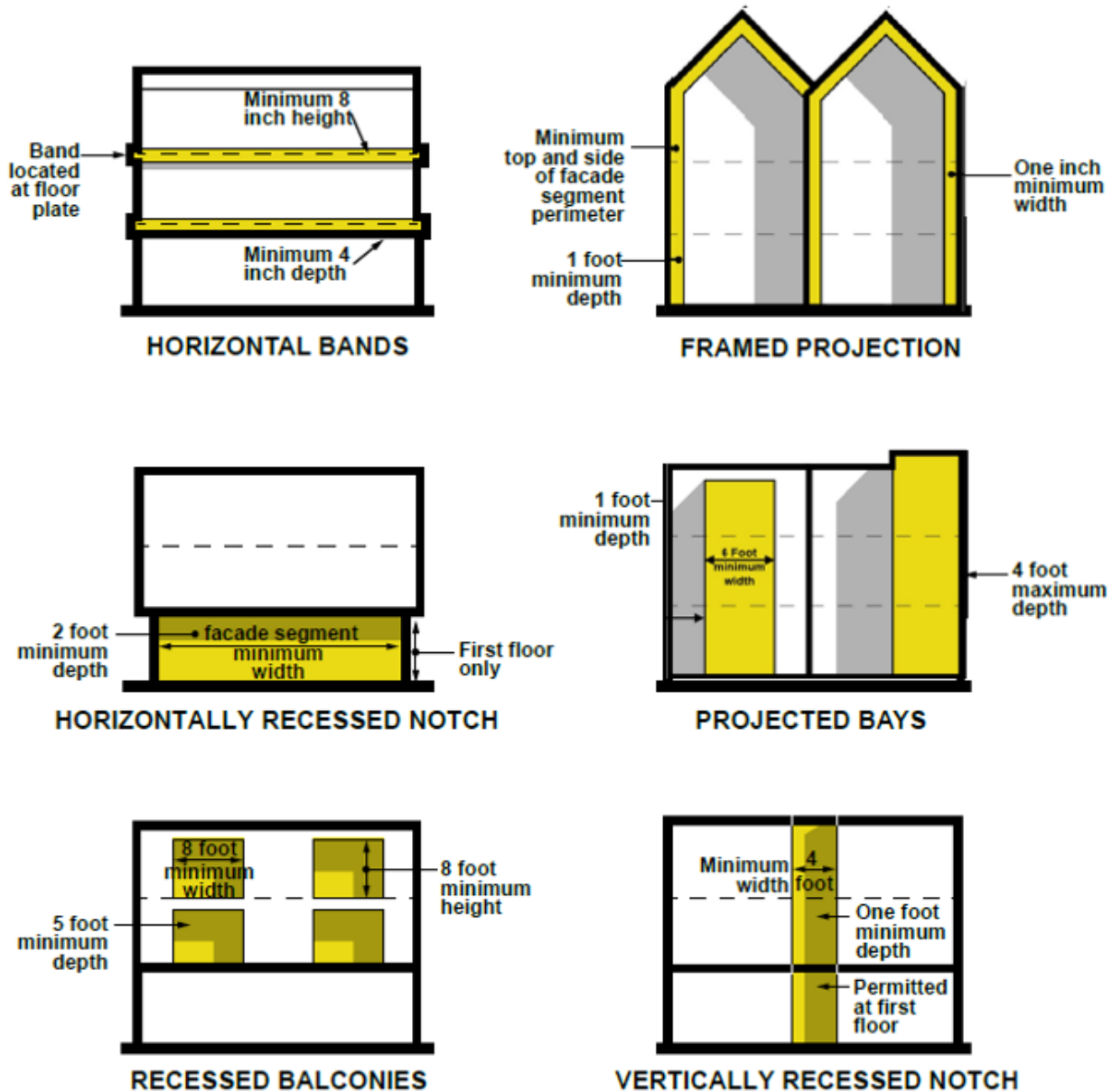
## Vertical Modulation in the case of a Density Bonus project



## Façade Articulation

The ODS include new articulation standards. Such standards result in defined increments within façade segments that help reduce the perceived massing of a building. Façade articulation works in concert with Roofline Options and Fenestration Options (see Architectural Elements) to establish scale and provide sufficient variety to create visual interest in a coherent, consistent manner. Applicants shall select a minimum of one and a maximum of two façade articulation options to be applied to each facade segment and each option includes specific minimum dimensions and exterior material enhancements depending on the selected articulation features. The images on the next page indicate the façade articulation options that will be incorporated into the ODS.

## Façade Articulation Options



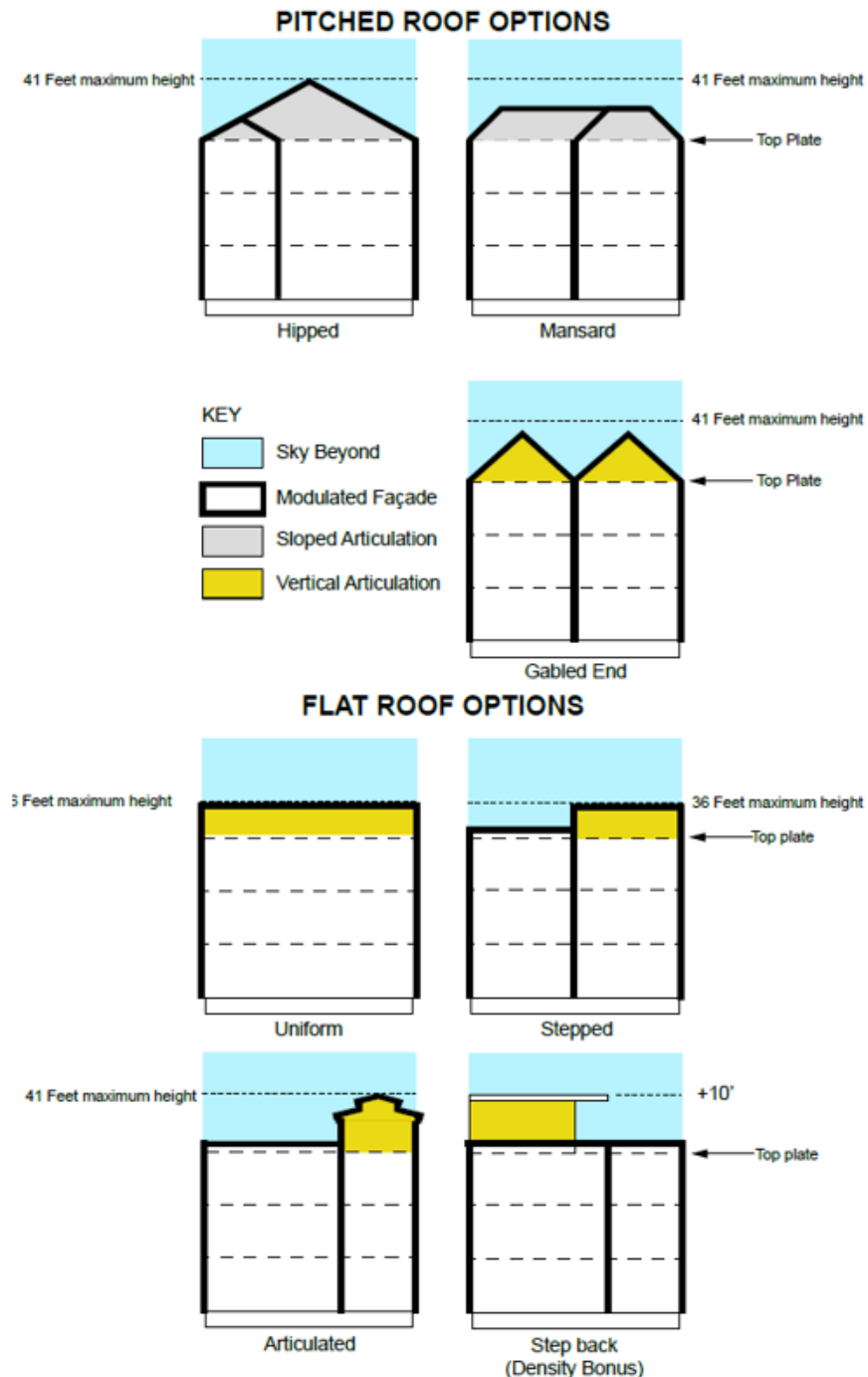
## Architectural Design Elements

In addition to the above modulation requirements, the objective design standards will require a variety of architectural design elements to ensure quality building design. The standards will include requirements pertaining to cladding and accent materials, façade and accent colors, roofs (forms, materials, colors), and fenestration. Standards will also list building materials that will be permitted for use on new multi-family projects and limit certain building materials, so as to ensure higher quality finishes. To prevent future multi-family development to become too similar or “cookie cutter” in appearance, the standards allow for several options in each of the required architectural element categories below.

## Roof Forms

Standards pertaining to rooflines will identify specific required dimensions and permitted roofing materials. Similar to the façade articulation options, the ODS will provide a number of roofline silhouettes that can be applied to projects. The images below demonstrate the sloped and flat roof options available to multi-family projects.

### Roofline Articulation Options

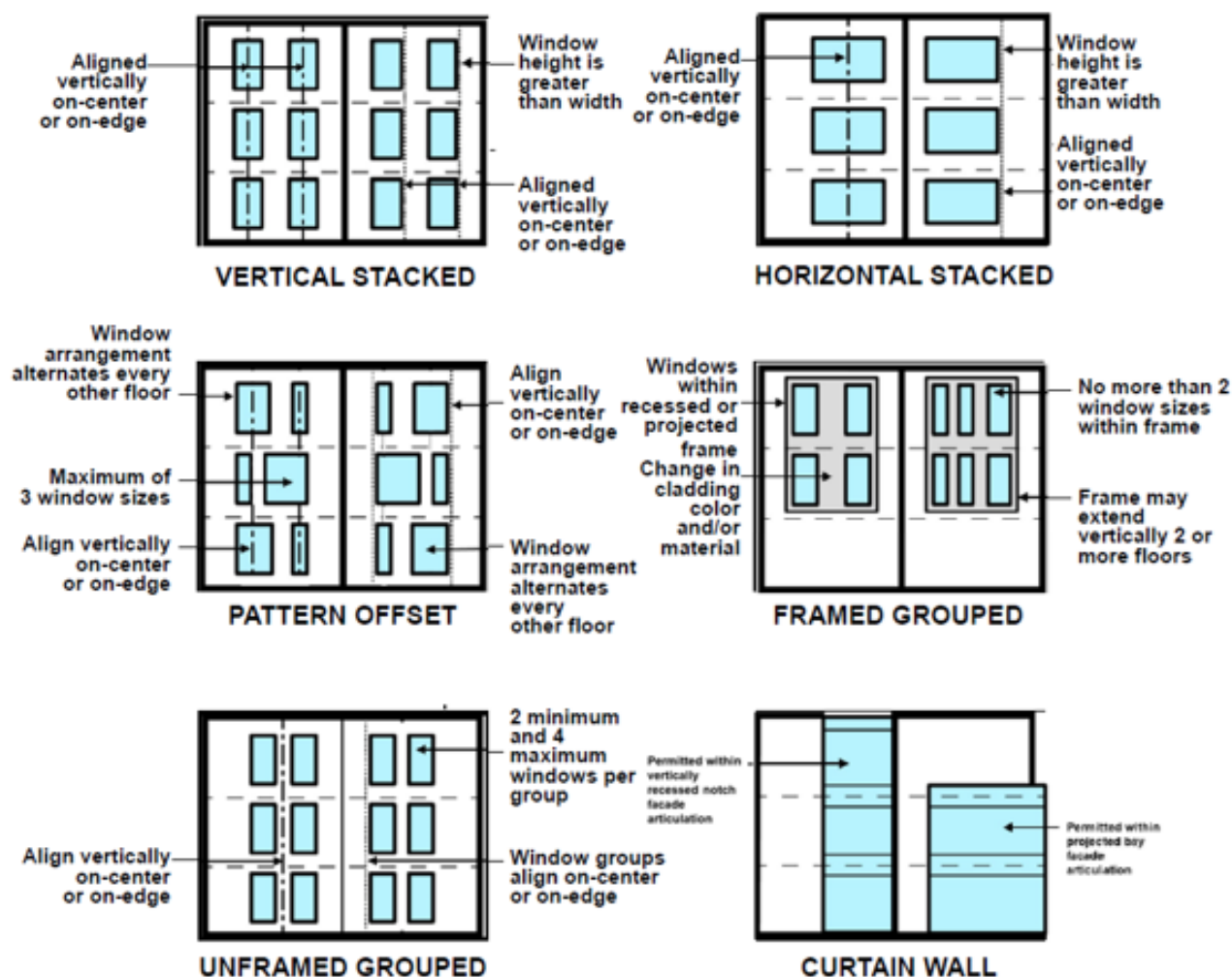


## Fenestration

Another element of the ODS that will ensure architectural detailing for new projects is the fenestration pattern. All window and door openings will be required to be recessed by two inches, to provide depth and shadow lines on building facades. Additionally, at least 20% of façade area facing streets and COSAs must include window and door openings.

The following images provide several options for fenestration patterns.

### **Fenestration Articulation – Window Arrangement Options**



Finally, additional requirements for architectural features such as building materials, canopies and awnings, and building entries will be included in the ODS. Staff will provide greater detail on the above illustrations during the PowerPoint presentation, as well as on other development and design standards for DRB's consideration and discussion.

## **EXHIBITS**

1. Draft Multi-Family Zoning and Objective Design Standards – Amendments to GMC Chapter 30.11 Residential Districts