



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Presentation of Proposed Amendments to GMC Chapter 30.12 Commercial Districts Regarding Multi-Family Development Standards and Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Residential and Residential Mixed-Use Projects

1. Motion to provide direction on the proposed concepts for multi-family residential and residential mixed-use zoning amendments and objective design standards in commercial zones and to proceed with finalizing the standards for presentation to the Design Review Board and Planning Commission prior to returning to City Council for Introduction.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Report

Approved for February 27, 2024 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff is presenting a variety of new site planning, massing & scale, and architectural element concepts for multi-family residential and residential mixed-use development in commercial zones (C1 Neighborhood Commercial, C2 Community Commercial, C3 Commercial Services, and CH Commercial Hillside) for Council's review and comment. Based on Council's feedback, staff will continue preparation of the code amendments to be brought before the Design Review Board and Planning Commission, following public outreach, prior to returning to City Council for introduction.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a motion providing comments to staff on the proposed concepts and objective design standards for multi-family residential and residential mixed-use development in commercial zones and direct staff regarding continued preparation of final draft amendments to Chapter 30.12 Commercial Districts.

ANALYSIS

The City is in the process of preparing development standard amendments and objective design standards for multi-family residential and mixed-use projects in commercial zones citywide and this is a check-in with City Council for feedback.

Background:

For many years Glendale Zoning Code has permitted mixed use developments with high density residential standards in the C1, C2, C3 and CH commercial zones throughout the City. These zones tend to be located along major and secondary arterials, and signature streets, such as Colorado, Broadway, parts of Glenoaks and Foothill, where transit options are available and where proximity to nearby goods and services encourage walking, biking and other active transportation trips (rather than vehicle trips). Although zoning permits mixed residential-commercial development opportunities in these zones, relatively few privately funded mixed-use developments have been built in commercial zones because of the existing standards.

As part of the SB2 Grant Program, staff has been working with Crandall Arambula (consultant) to updating the commercial zoning standards to streamline residential and mixed-use development in commercial corridors and centers. This is in conjunction with a similar project, previously presented before Council, involving the updates to multi-family development standards and new objective design standards for residential districts. These updates are vital, since current commercial standards only allow for multi-family residential development in commercial zones based the existing R-1250 High Density standards, intended for multi-family residential neighborhoods. The R-1250 standards, which include a maximum lot coverage of 50%, floor area ratio of 1.2, stepped setbacks on all floors with a substantial setback at the front, three-story height limit, etc., have proven to be too stringent and have restricted residential development in commercial zones. The very few mixed-use projects developed over the last decade have required numerous variances from the R-1250 standards, or various concessions and waivers for those that featured affordable units and density bonuses. The proposed updates would eliminate the application of the R-1250 standards in commercial zones while providing objective design standards to ensure high quality multi-family residential and residential mixed-use projects. This work is part of Community Development's efforts to create an improved entitlement and streamlined review process.

Furthermore, updates that will streamline residential development in commercial corridors and centers are in keeping with current best planning practices of mixed-use, sustainable development and the City's Housing Element policies and programs. The

Housing Element includes Policy 2.1 which seeks to encourage higher-density residential development in proximity to public transportation, services, and activity centers, such as those located along commercial corridors and centers. Housing Policy 2.1 also anticipates increased densities in already developed areas and those already established for development, such as those along commercial corridors. While no density increase (dwelling units per acre) is proposed for residential development over that currently permitted by right, the fact that residential and mixed-use development would be streamlined and not hampered by outdated development standard is a significant improvement over current conditions, where housing units are lacking along the City’s commercial corridors outside of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) and Tropic area.

The updates also address Housing Element Program 3E, which calls for the review and modification of mixed-use development standards on existing commercial corridors to encourage multi-family residential and mixed-use development and reduce government constraints (Glendale Housing Element Housing Plan 2021-2029, page 40), and Housing Element Program 9B(H) that calls for the replacement of the R-1250 standards in commercial zones and elimination of the any discretionary permit requirement for 100% residential projects in commercial zones, as well as the preparation of objective design standards for multi-family and mixed-use projects, as identified in Housing Element Program 9B(I). Lastly, modifying the development standards will increase the likelihood of increasing housing units; increasing certainty in the review process; and ensuring livability and design compatibility with surrounding neighborhood.

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS

The new development standards and objective design standards will be consolidated in a new subsection at the end of the Commercial Districts Chapter: GMC 30.12.060 Development and objective design standards for residential and mixed-use development in commercial districts. A separate, stand-alone pattern book is also proposed to help illustrate the application of the objective architectural design standards.

One of the first necessary updates to the Commercial Districts Chapter, however, will be outside of the new GMC 30.12.060 subsection and in the general commercial Land Use Table 30.12-A, regarding Residential Uses (excerpt below). These amendments include the elimination of the R-1250 applicable references, which are replaced by the new subsection reference, and also the elimination of the ground floor commercial Conditional Use Permit (C) requirement so as to implement the Housing Element direction:

LAND USE (1)(2)	C1	C2	C3	CR	CPD	CH	CA
Residential Uses							
Residential congregate living, non-medical, subject to the provisions of the R-1250 zone Section 30.12.060 and provided that the ground floor level is occupied by permitted commercial uses	P	P	P			P	

Residential congregate living, non-medical, at the ground floor level subject to the provisions of the R-1250 zone Section 30.12.060	A	A	A			A	
Multiple residential dwellings subject to the provisions of the R-1250 zone Section 30.12.060 and provided further that the ground floor level is occupied with permitted commercial uses	P	P	P	P		P	
Multiple residential dwellings with dwelling units at the ground floor level subject to provisions of the R-1250 zone	C	C	C			C	
One residential dwelling per lot subject to the provisions of the R-1250 zone	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Senior housing subject to the provisions of the R-1250 zone Section 30.12.060 and provided further that the ground floor level is occupied with permitted commercial uses	P	P	P	P		P	
Senior housing at the ground floor level subject to the provision of the R-1250 Zone	C	C	C	C		C	

P – Permitted Use; C – Conditional Use Permit required; A – Administrative Use Permit Required

The new GM 30.12.060 section will address most of the R-1250 development standards topics, but with updated limits to reflect the applicable conditions for residential and mixed-use projects along commercial corridors. Below is a summary and table of the development standards and updates:

DENSITY:

No changes are proposed to the existing density (dwelling units per acre) limits. Current density limit for the R-1250 zones depend on the lot width. For lots 90 feet or less in width, the density is one unit per 1,250 SF of lot area. For lots greater than 90 feet in width, an increased density is permitted – up to 43 du/ac in R-1250. In order to incentivize lot consolidation, more units within a larger project are allowed on a 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):

Because of the various height limits in the commercial zones, density regulated by a single FAR number is problematic in terms of achieving development potential; also, this always a requested variance for the few, newer mixed use projects. Therefore, the R-1250's 1.2 FAR maximum would be eliminated as part of the residential streamlining amendments for commercial zones. Instead, the units per acre will be the prevailing density regulation, while objective design standards will result in less boxy, more undulated building forms within the maximum height limit.

LOT COVERAGE:

The existing 50% minimum lot coverage limit in the R-1250 (High Density) zones is substandard for mixed-use development; again, this is a typical variance request for mixed-use residential projects in commercial zones. Staff is proposing to increase the lot coverage limit to a minimum of 85%, which would still provide setbacks around the perimeter of the building within the urban context and allow for commercial streetscape.

SETBACKS

The existing R-1250 setback standards, often criticized for resulting in “wedding cake” massing and not being consistent with typical mixed-use building typology, will be updated to not require different minimums and averages on each residential floor. The substantial R-1250 setback requirements are also more appropriate for multi-family residential neighborhoods with landscaped front yards. Instead, a uniform minimum standard for all floors is proposed for the interior, street front and side street elevations. Such uniform minimums will be layered with the objective design standards to ensure articulation across the elevations and varying depth in building massing. Additional setbacks and an increased setback for the upper floor will be required for projects abutting single and multi-family zones.

HEIGHT

The current R-1250 height maximums of 36 feet and three stories will be eliminated. Instead, the existing height standards in the corresponding commercial zone and height district will apply. Upper floor step-back requirements for projects adjacent to single-family and multi-family zones will ensure appropriate transitions between multi-family and single family properties.

MINIMUM LANDSCAPING

Currently, R-1250 zoning requires that 25% of the lot be landscaped. This standard will be updated to specify that the same 25% percentage amount of the required common open space be landscaped.

OPEN SPACE

Currently, R-1250 zoning requires that 40 square feet (SF) of private open space (private balconies, patios), as well as 200 SF of common open space be provided for the first 25 dwelling units on a lot, with 150 SF of common space for the second 25 units on a lot, and 100 SF of common open space for each unit above 50 units. Such standards will be revised to be consistent with the current open space standards for residential development in Mixed-Use Districts (IMU-R, SFMU and DSP): 140 square feet per unit, which can be provided in the form of private or common open space. Additional development/design standards for open space will also apply.

Development Feature	Current R-1250 Zoning Standards	Proposed Amendments
Residential Density (Maximum)	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.	Same, no change.
Floor Area Ratio (Maximum)	1.2	Eliminated.
Lot Coverage (Maximum)	50%	Increased to 85%

Setback, Street Front	20 ft. minimum & 23 ft. average for any garage or first residential floor; not less than 23 ft. & 26 ft. average for the second & third residential floors	Reduced to be in keeping with typical mixed-use buildings.
Setback, Street Side	5 ft. minimum & 8 ft. average for the first residential floor; not less than 8 feet & 11 ft. average for the second residential floor; not less than 11 ft. & 14 ft. average for the third residential floor	Reduced to be in keeping with typical mixed-use buildings.
Setback, Interior	5 ft. minimum & 8 ft. average for the first residential floor; not less than 8 feet & 11 ft. average for the second residential floor; not less than 11 ft & 14 feet average for the third residential floor	5 feet minimum only.
Interior when abutting the ROS, R1R or R1 zones	8 ft. minimum & 11 ft. average for the first residential floor; not less than 11 feet & 14 ft. average for the second residential floor; not less than 17 ft. & 20 ft. average for the third residential floor	New objective design standards require step-backs to ensure appropriate transitions.
Minimum Permanently Landscaped Open Space	25% of lot area	25% of common area.
Height Limits	Maximum of 3 stories & a maximum of 36 feet. On lots having a lot width of 90 feet or less, a maximum of 2 stories & a maximum of 26 feet.	Applicable height limit for the corresponding “C” zone and height district.

OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

In addition to the development standards, the new code section features objective design standards (ODS) for residential and mixed-use development. The new ODS will be similar in formatting to those in the Tropico Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning, and in terms of massing and architectural detail concepts to those in the proposed objective design standards for multi-family residential development in the GMC 30.11 Residential Districts. As per State law, only objective design standards that are measurable and quantifiable will be included in the proposed updates.

One of the main goals for this report to Council is to solicit Council’s feedback on several new massing and architectural design concepts. These concepts will be presented in detail during the PowerPoint presentation to City Council.

Massing and Scale

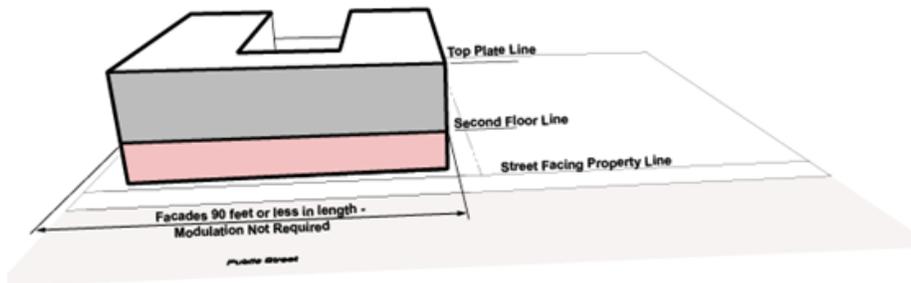
The intent of the standards is to minimize the bulk of buildings, avoid massive “box-like” structures, and provide transitions in height between new and existing buildings. Large buildings are broken down into smaller scaled increments through the application of Façade Modulation, both horizontally and vertically, as well as Façade Articulation standards, and further augmented by the Roofline and Fenestration standards under the Architectural Elements subsection; new definitions for these items will be included in the proposed ordinance. The combination of all of these standards are intended to produce a

coherent and consistent application of options that results in buildings with an appropriate sense of scale. All new buildings shall meet the following modulation standards for all sides of a building. The standards apply to all residential floor area above the ground floor.

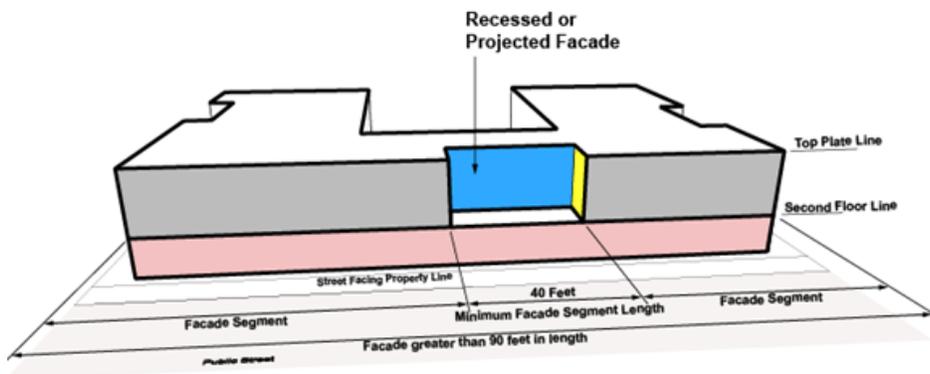
Horizontal Modulation

Horizontal modulation reduces the perceived length of a building or creates the appearance of multiple buildings. Standards include breaking up elevations of buildings into façade segments and requiring recessed segments.

HORIZONTAL MODULATION STANDARDS - FACADES LESS THAN 90 FEET IN LENGTH



HORIZONTAL MODULATION STANDARDS - FACADES GREATER THAN 90 FEET IN LENGTH

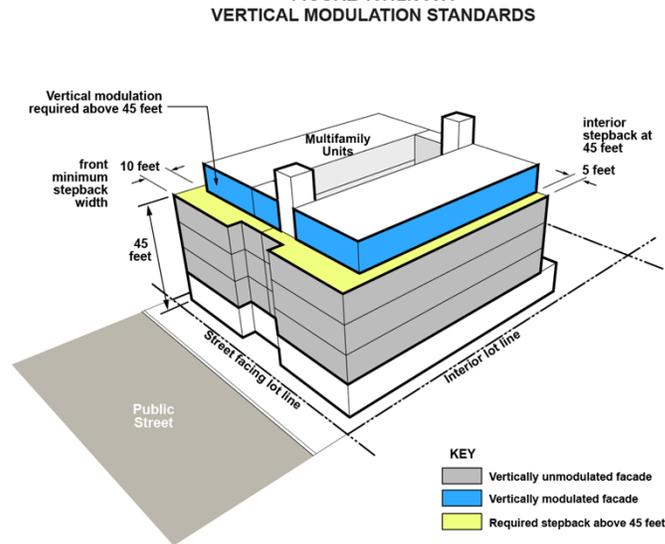


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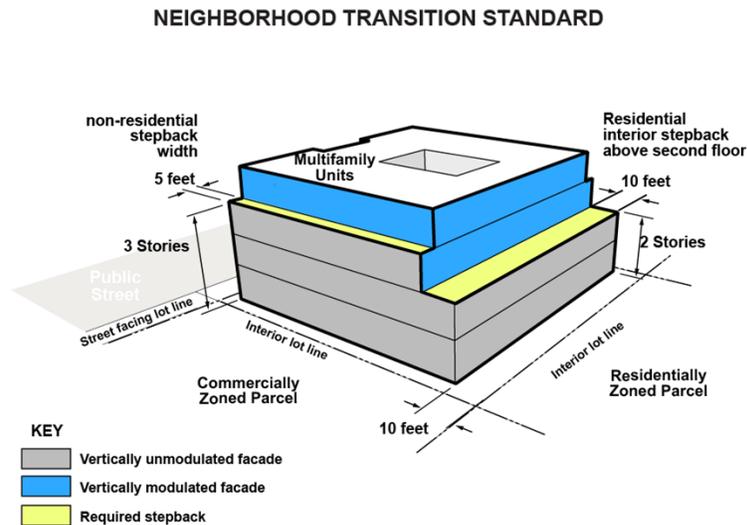
- Unmodulated floor areas
- Modulated floor areas
- 10 feet minimum modulated facade depth
- Ground floor commercial or residential lobby/common area

Vertical Modulation

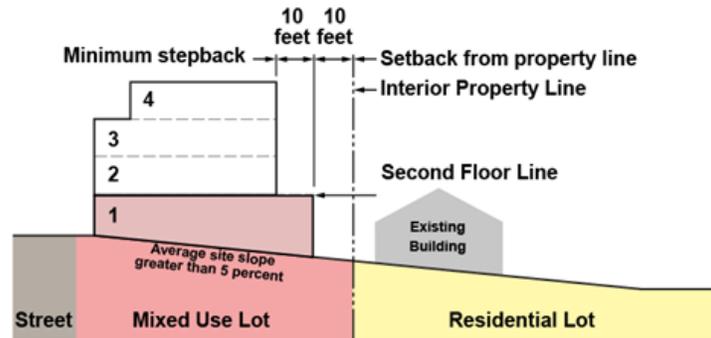
Vertical modulation provides a height transition by stepping upper floors back from the lower levels. Such modulation creates visual interest, increases solar access to ground floor common areas, and reduces shadows upon adjacent properties, public sidewalks and open spaces. Graphics for these standards are on the following page.



For projects adjacent to residential zones, vertical modulation standards specifically require additional step-backs for upper floors to provide massing transitions.

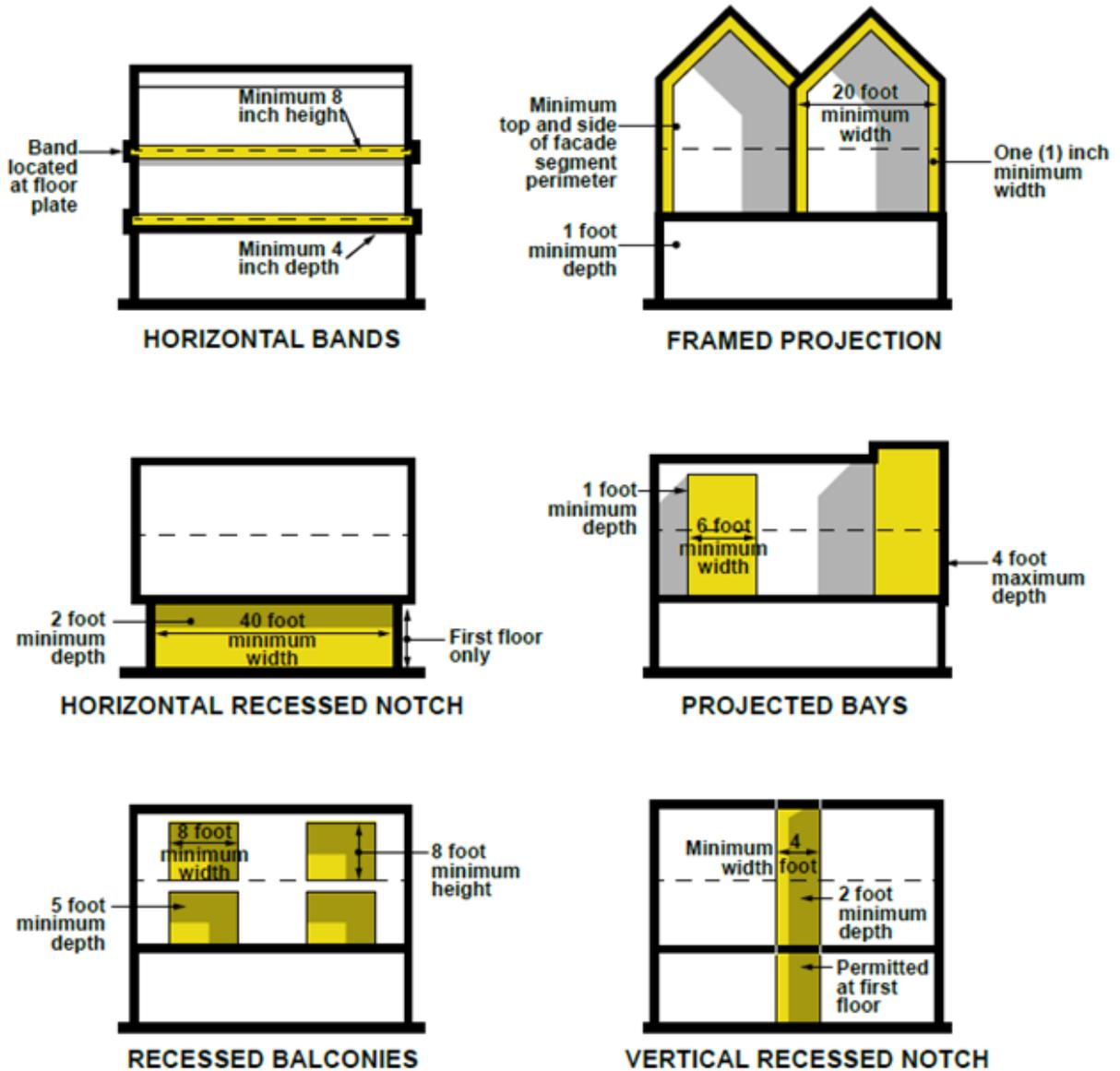


SLOPING SITE TRANSITION STANDARD



Façade Articulation Standards for Modulation

The following articulation standards on the next page are included under Massing and Scale because their application 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. For each façade segment, a minimum of one and a maximum of two articulation options may be selected from among the following: horizontal bands, framed projections, horizontal recessed notch, projecting bays, recessed balconies, and vertical recessed notch. Graphics of these façade articulation standards are shown below:

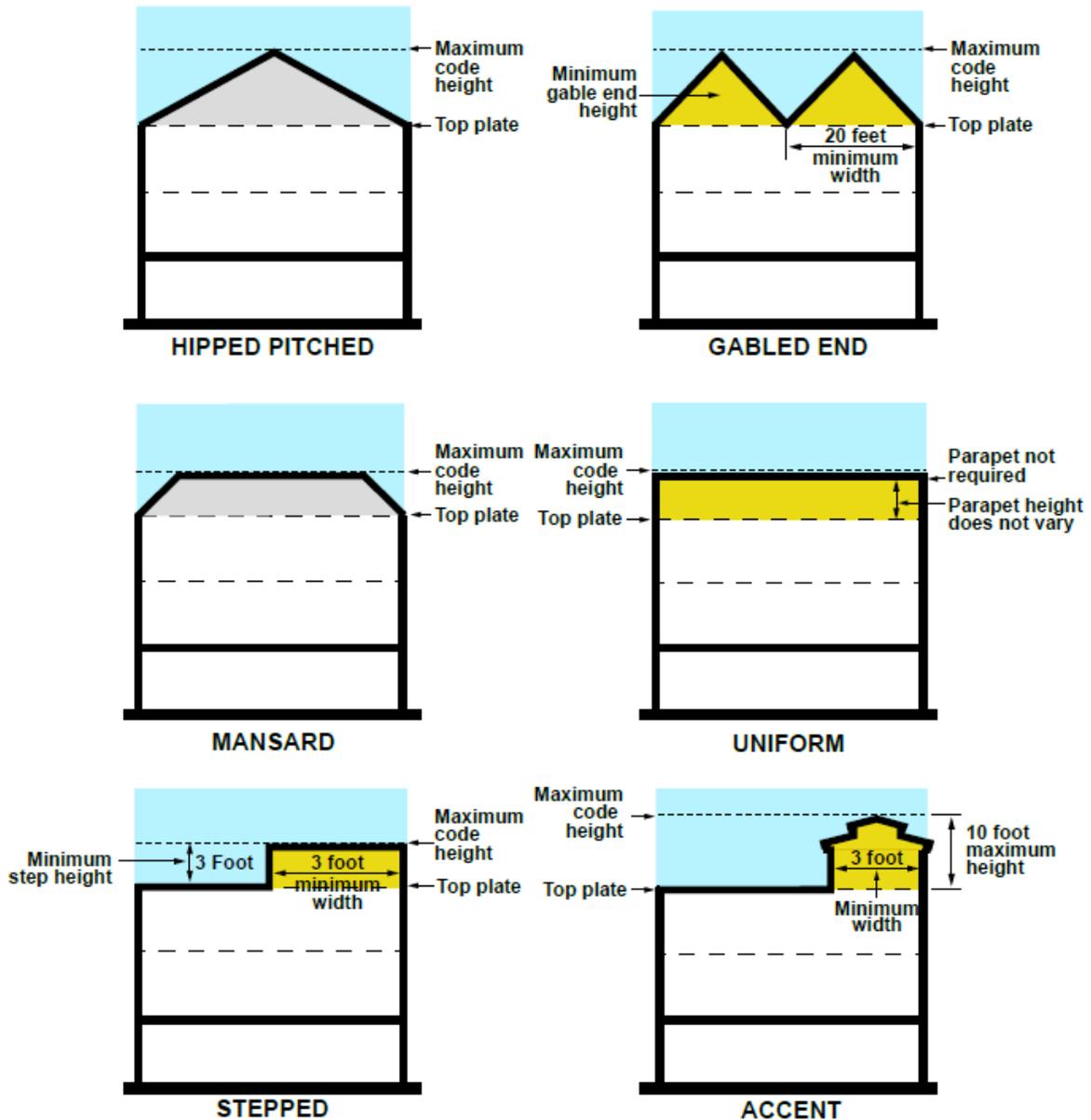


Architectural Elements

Another main subsection of the ODS is Architectural Elements. This includes standards related to façade materials, façade colors, roof forms, fenestration, awnings/canopies, etc. Regulations will specify quality materials, prohibit neon colors, and provide options for roofline and fenestration designs.

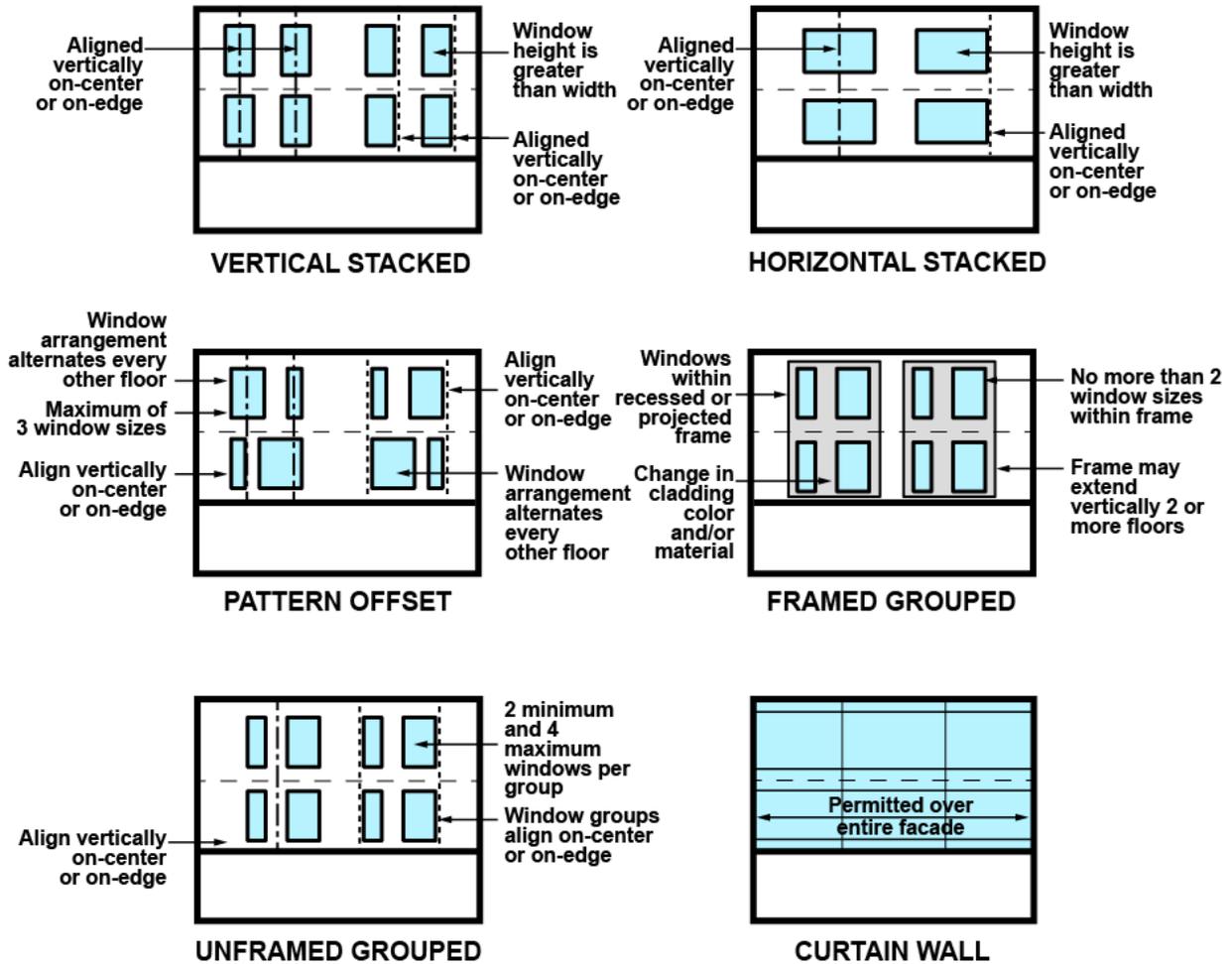
Roof Options:

While the height of residential and mixed use projects will be regulated by the height maximum of the applicable Commercial Zone/Height District, the ODS feature roofline choices for such projects, distinguishing options for both pitched and flat roofs, as illustrated below:



Fenestration Options:

To ensure appropriate window design, placement and rhythm along a residential facade, the ODS also provides regulations for a variety of window patterns:



The new ODS section concludes with standards for: Ground Floor Residential Treatment (entries, façade transparency, etc); Freestanding Walls, Fences and Gates; Utilities; Outdoor Lighting; and Residential Private Storage Space.

Staff’s will provide greater detail on the above illustrations during the PowerPoint presentation, as well as on other development and design standards for Council’s consideration and discussion.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

Based on Council’s comments and direction, staff will update the presentation and prepare standards for public outreach and comment by the development community and neighborhood groups prior to Design Review Board and Planning Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

This action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15262 entitled "Feasibility and Planning Studies" because the current work involves just that -- feasibility or planning studies -- for possible future actions which the City has not approved or adopted.

Once staff receives direction on preparation of the new standards, further consideration of environmental factors will be undertaken.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

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EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS

1. None