

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE LAKE MERRITT STATION AREA

DECEMBER 2014



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## *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.

# 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.

## 2 Existing Design Context

### Urban Form

#### Blocks

The majority of roadways in the Planning Area are designed in a typical grid system. Laid out in the early 1850s, the streets frame small city blocks that measure approximately 1.6 acres (220 feet on the north-south face and 320 feet on the east-west face). The major exception to this pattern is in the Peralta/Laney College Plan District along the Lake Merritt Channel and where institutional uses (the Oakland Museum of California, Kaiser Convention Center, and the Oakland Unified School District Downtown Educational Complex) exist along 10th Street between Oak Street and 4th Avenue. In these areas, block sizes are much larger and break up the street grid pattern.

A few of the historic blocks in the Plan Area have been merged through street closures. 10th Street between Webster and Broadway was closed in order to convert four small blocks to two larger blocks to accommodate building of the Pacific Renaissance Plaza, Oakland Marriot Hotel, and Trans Pacific Centre. The Pacific Renaissance Plaza contains an internal courtyard and pedestrian pass-through. Alice Street, between 10th and 11th Streets, has also been closed to connect the Lincoln Recreation Center with Lincoln Elementary. Clear pedestrian and bicycle through access was preserved.

#### Parcels

Parcel sizes are relatively small in Chinatown, along 14th Street, and in the Eastlake Gateway, with typical lot frontages between 25 to 50 feet.

This small lot size creates a pedestrian-scale feeling and adds variety to the street. Parcels are larger for some government buildings and public facilities, including: the post office, the public library, the County offices, the County courthouse, and schools.

#### Building Orientation

In the predominant block pattern, buildings are built at or close to the sidewalk edge. In the Chinatown commercial area, where buildings have no setbacks from the sidewalk, businesses activate the streets and create a dynamic pedestrian experience. 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.

In the large institutional blocks of the Plan Area, buildings are set back from and often do not face or relate to the street.

In the Planning Area's smaller blocks, parking is generally at the interior of the block or in parking structures, though there are a few surface parking lots. These lots along with the large surface parking areas in the institutional blocks present opportunities for redevelopment.

### Architecture

#### 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



*A century and a half of building has created diverse street and architectural conditions in the Planning Area.*





*Building heights, lot sizes, uses, ground floor conditions, building period and architectural style vary widely throughout the Planning Area. Together, this variation creates diverse and distinctive experiences throughout the area.*

commercial center, ground floor building heights are generally around 10 to 15 feet. The ground floor is generally comprised of smaller pedestrian-scaled storefronts. Abundant windows and doors, and sometimes entirely open storefronts, allow visibility to the inside of these neighborhood-serving markets and create high levels of pedestrian interest and activity. Building materials vary from wood and stucco to concrete and brick.

This is in contrast to the character of building façades of many of the Plan Area's 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. However, landscaping surrounding these institutional buildings positively affects their character and relationship to the street.

### **Building Design Character**

Building design varies throughout the Plan Area, both in terms of scale and architectural style. Building heights range from one to 24 stories. Architectural styles included Asian historic design, Queen Anne and other Victorian residential design, early 20th century midrise residential and downtown commercial 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.

# 3 Historic Character

## Introduction

The Planning Area is one of the oldest areas of Oakland and contains a wealth of historic resources with special architectural characteristics that express a direct connection to the area’s past. Seven historic districts are located partly or entirely in the Plan Area. Some encompass multiple city blocks, and one has over 100 parcels. The Plan Area also includes numerous individual historic buildings and landmarks.

The Plan seeks to ensure preservation of historic buildings and that new development supports the existing historic and architectural character of the area. Opportunity sites for new development in the Planning Area exist within historic districts and adjacent to individual historic buildings. Careful design and planning of new development on these sensitive sites is necessary to ensure compatibility with historic resources. There are also opportunities for thoughtful design solutions that marry transit-oriented development with the preservation and/or reuse of historic buildings.

This document contains guidelines for implementing new development and appropriate modifications to existing resources. (See DG-58 through DG-68.) Since there is a large variety of historic styles and architectural details within the Planning Area, new development must specifically consider its local context and adjacent properties.

The following provides an overview of key defining characteristics of the historic resources in the Planning Area.

## Historic Urban Form Characteristics

The small blocks formed by the original 1850s street grid system are the setting for the many historic properties in the Planning Area. With the exception of blocks with major civic landmarks, small parcels are a distinguishing feature of historic districts and properties in the Planning Area. Historic commercial and multifamily properties are typically built at the sidewalk line while detached residential buildings have only a small setback. The compact and fine grain urban quality that arises from small storefronts, narrow house lots, and tight building footprints in close proximity to each other creates a visually rich and lively pedestrian experience.

## Building Character Defining Features

This section provides an overview of the specific features that define the architectural character of historic resources in the Planning Area. Architectural styles vary widely through the Plan Area, from Queen Anne houses to Beaux Arts civic buildings. The character defining features of five typologies of buildings are summarized on the following pages:

- Small-scale Residential
- Midrise Residential
- Chinatown Commercial
- Downtown Commercial
- Civic



One of the oldest areas of Oakland, the Plan Area contains a wealth and diversity of historic resources.





*Narrow lots, asymmetrical and highly articulated facades, polygonal bay windows, prominent stoops, recessed entrances on covered porches or with overhangs, gabled roofs, wood paneling and a high degree of ornamentation characterize the residences in the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District.*



*Attic windows, sunburst apices, fish-scaled shingles, dentils, and ornamental corner support brackets are character defining features of Queen Anne style residences in the District.*



*Recessed entrances with overhanging arches and spindlework and polygonal bay windows characterize many of the area's late 19th century residences.*



*The Stick-Queen Anne Style Real Estate Union Houses feature hip roofs, polygonal bay windows, covered entrances, ornamental wood paneling, and decorative roof cornice support brackets.*



*Though modified over time, this attached triplet of Colonial Revival duplexes is significant for its ingenious adjoined structure.*

## Small Scale Residential

Most of the Plan Area's small scale historic residences are in the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District (an Area of Primary Importance). Extending from Fallon to Harrison Streets between 6th and 8th Streets, this District began as a residential area in the late 1800s and continues largely so to this day. The area is characterized by one- to three-story detached wood frame houses with some matching pairs, triplets, and small multiple-unit buildings. Residences are predominantly Queen Anne, Italianate, and Colonial Revival as well as related and transitional styles built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They are largely built on small lots with 25-foot frontages. Wall heights are up to 30 feet with pitched roofs peaking at about 45 feet.

Defining characteristics of these buildings include highly articulated facades with a clearly recognizable building base, middle, and top. Asymmetrical facades, front stoops, covered porches, polygonal bay windows, horizontal wood siding, gabled and hip roofs, attic windows, and occasional corner towers characterize buildings in the district. Common ornamental details include recessed and elaborately ornamented entrances with overhangs, lintels, and spindled wood work; cornices and eaves with dentils, decorative support brackets, and other details; double-hung windows; and facade treatments that include decorative shingles with fish-scale, diamond, or other patterns and sunburst apices.

Other significant small scale residences exist outside of the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District, such as the pair of Stick-Queen Anne Style Real Estate Union Houses.

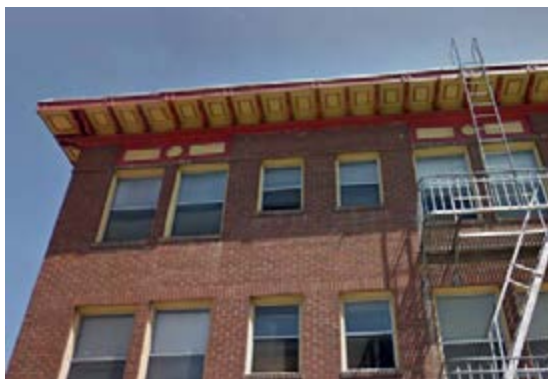
## Midrise Residential

A number of distinctive early 20th century three- to five-story apartment buildings are located in the area east of the Oakland Museum and Laney College and in the Eastlake District. These mostly rectangular buildings with raised basements and no setbacks from the sidewalk exhibit a diversity of detailing and ornamentation. Common characteristics include a grid pattern of wall elements and windows, double hung windows, recessed entrances, and highly articulated and ornamented window lintels, eaves, and cornices. Exteriors that are predominantly brick, stucco, or wood typically include some form of surface embellishment, such as three-dimensional brickwork or terra cotta or glazed tile detailing.

One significant cluster of buildings is the 10th and Oak Streets Apartment Group (an Area of Secondary Importance). This cluster is made up of six buildings built in the 1910s that characterize Lake Merritt area apartment development from that era. The Faustina Arts & Crafts building is part of this group (pictured here, top and middle left).

The Madison Park Apartments (middle and bottom right), is a Craftsman/Colonial Revival five-story building from 1908. Its polygonal bay windows and classical ornamentation make it a prominent building in the Plan Area.

The Hotel Lakeside, built in the 1920s (bottom left) and the Townsend Apartments, built in the 1910s (top right) are also notable examples of early 20th century midrise apartment buildings in the Planning Area.



*No setbacks from the sidewalk, a grid pattern of windows and other wall elements, and well-crafted details made of brick, wood, terra cotta, and tile characterize the early 20th century midrise apartment buildings near Lake Merritt.*





Frontages that completely fill the lot with no setbacks from sidewalk create a continuous facade along the street.



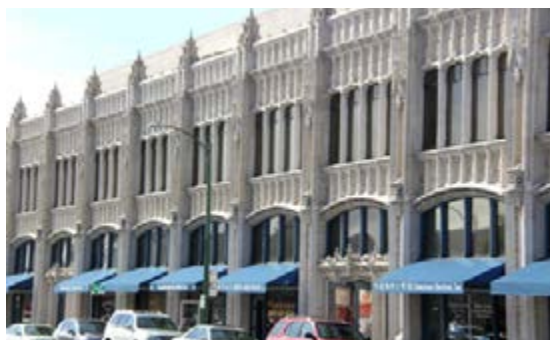
Wider building frontages are typically broken up by rhythmic vertical elements such as piers and pilasters.



Well-articulated facades create a clear distinction between the ground floor and upper stories.



Roll-up doors allow storefronts to be completely open to the sidewalk.



The Hebern Electrical Code Building (801-833 Harrison Street) is a historic landmark in the Chinatown Commercial District.

## Chinatown Commercial

Covering a roughly four block area between Franklin and Harrison and 7th and 9th Streets with an extension running east along 7th, the Chinatown Commercial District, an Area of Primary Importance, is the only historic urban Chinatown in California outside San Francisco. Development in this area dates back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. It is dominated by early 20th century buildings with ground floor retail commercial uses and upper stories supporting residences, offices, and the meeting rooms of Chinese community associations.

Buildings in this district are between one and four stories with most of the historic buildings not more than two stories. Narrow ground floor storefronts, between 25 to 50 feet wide, that completely fill their street frontages and are not set back from the sidewalk create a continuous façade that frames lively pedestrian and commercial activity. Abundant windows and doors, and sometimes entirely open storefronts, allow visibility to the inside of these businesses, further activating the street.

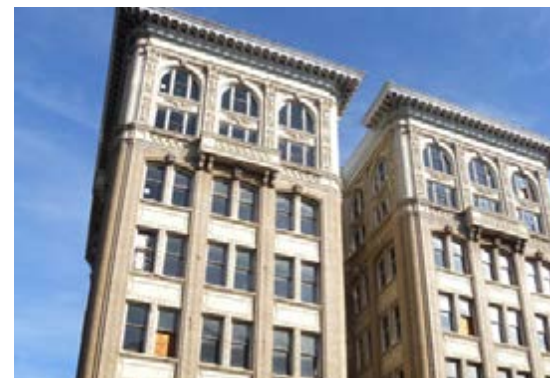
Narrow stucco and brick building facades are well articulated and detailed with elements such as cornices and tiled pent roofs, while wider frontages are broken up by a rhythmic repetition of vertical elements such as piers and pilasters. Double-hung and casement windows are common on upper stories. Many building frontages have gone through repeated remodeling.

The Chinese Presbyterian Church and 801-833 Harrison Street (the former Hebern Electrical Code Co. Building) are designated landmarks in the district, and the recently landmarked Buddhist Church of Oakland is located nearby.



## Downtown Commercial

Historic structures with rich architectural details and craftsmanship provide a distinctive character to the Downtown Oakland Historic District (which is listed on the National Register) and its surroundings. Common features among the historic buildings in the area include articulated facades made of brick, stone, and terra cotta. Changes in material clearly distinguish building bases from upper stories. Ornamental cornices, entries, and windows, including arched windows, are also prominent features. Important buildings dating from the 1900s to 1920s that are emblematic of this building typology include the King Block (top left), the Key System Building (top right), the Hotel Harrison which is part of the Coit Building Group (bottom right), Hotel Oakland (bottom left), and the Alameda County Title Insurance Company Building (not shown).



*Highly-articulated brick, stone, and terra cotta facades; distinct base, middle, and upper portions of buildings; and rich architectural ornamentation are characteristic features of the early 20th century buildings in and around the Downtown Historic District.*



*The civic buildings in the area have large footprints stretching over entire city blocks. Symmetry, arched windows, and rhythmic and repetitive placement of windows and other facade elements create a formal architectural character.*

*Monumental entrances are a key feature of the civic buildings in the planning area.*

## Civic

There are a number of significant civic buildings in the Planning Area located between Lake Merritt and Downtown. Some significant historic landmarks include the Oakland Municipal (Kaiser) Auditorium built in the 1910s (top left, entrance at bottom right), Civic Center Post Office built in the 1930s (middle left, top right), Alameda County Courthouse built in the 1930s (bottom left), and Oakland Museum of California built in the 1960s (not shown), all of which are designated landmarks. These buildings have a formal architectural character that is reflective of their civic importance and identifies them as focal points of the community. Some of the features common to the major buildings in the area include large building footprints stretching over an entire city block, monumental building entrances, classical architectural motifs, consistent placement of windows and rhythmic and repetitive facade details.



## 4 Building Design Guidelines

### Site Planning and Building Orientation

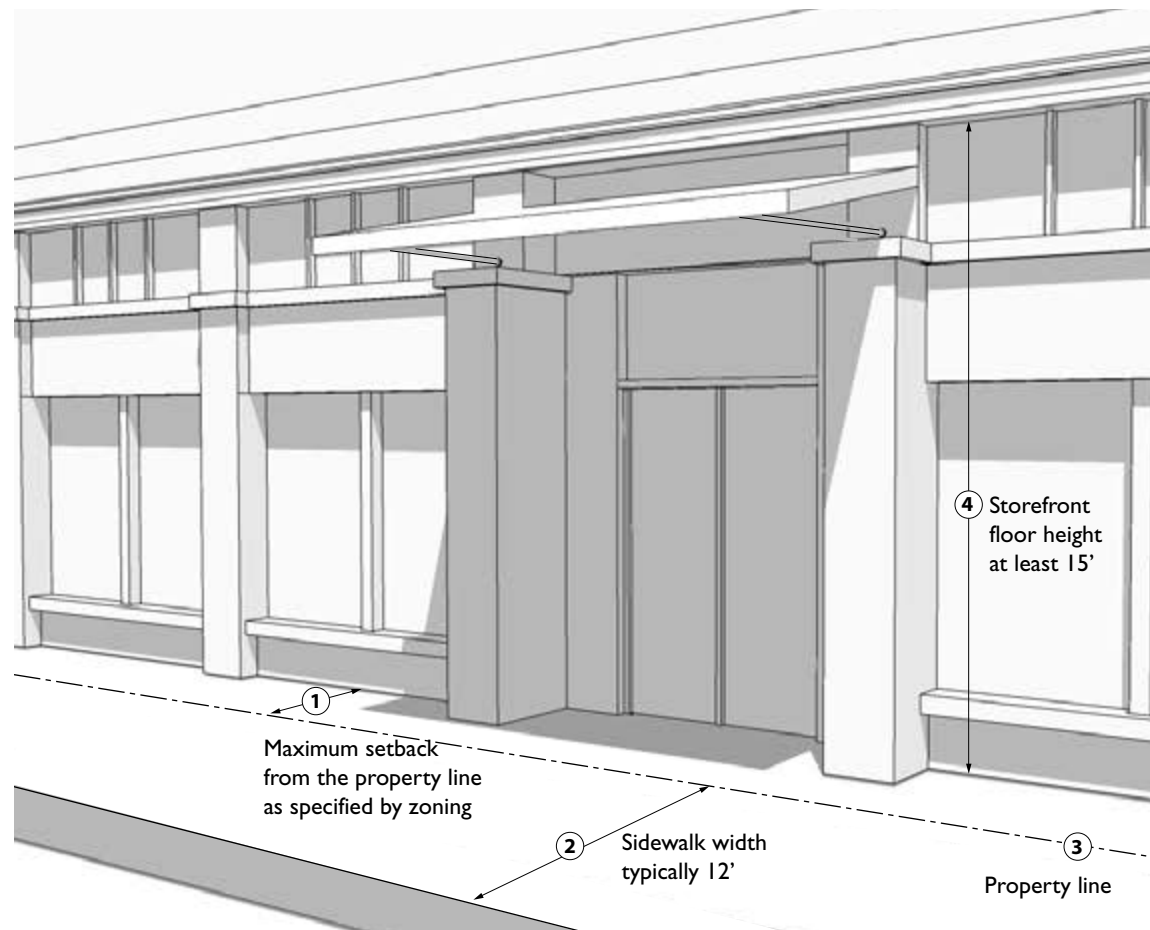
Site planning and building orientation have a significant impact on the urban environment, and can help shape a vibrant and pedestrian oriented neighborhood.

**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.

**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



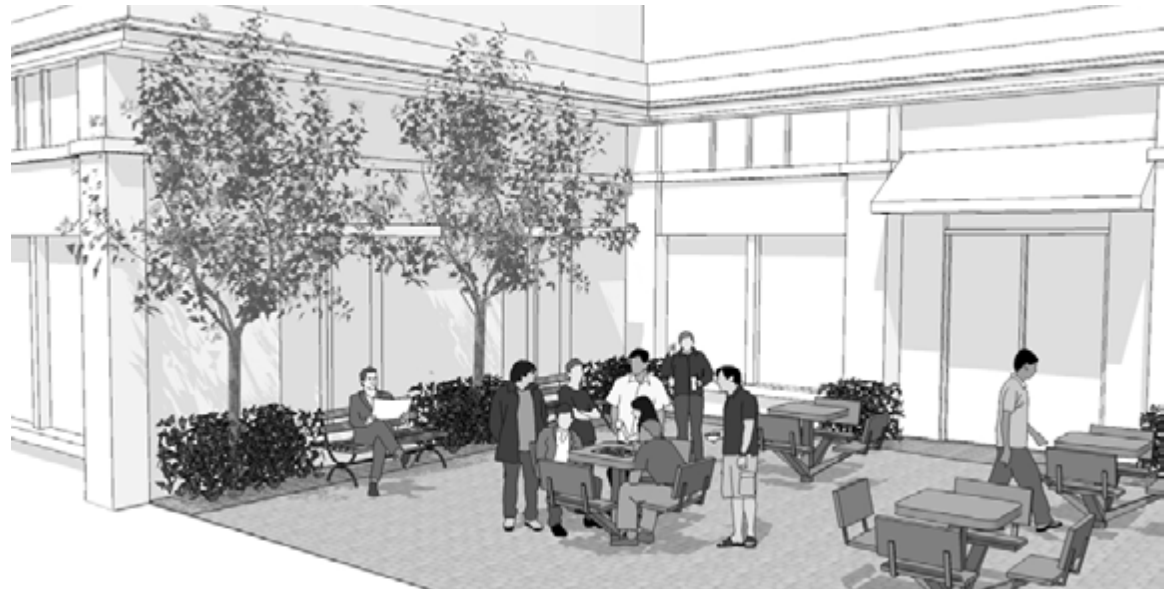
*Build the ground level of commercial buildings near sidewalks and close to side property lines. A consistent series of commercial buildings constructed at the sidewalk and adjacent to one another creates a street wall and a defined pedestrian space (DG-2).*

**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 existing sidewalks are too narrow.

**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).*



*A mixed-use building incorporates pedestrian thoroughways and an internal courtyard to provide open space for both building occupants and passersby.*



*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.
- 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 lot frontages include all street-facing frontages, and can also include frontages that address public spaces that will likely see the most pedestrian activity or serve as important gateways.
- Corner lots or sites that encompass a block may have more than one primary frontage.

**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, plantings, 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 and Location of Building Equipment and other Non-Active Spaces.** Mechanical, electrical, and all other building equipment, as well as non-active spaces, such as parking area, locker areas or mechanical rooms, should be concealed from all public right-of-ways, pedestrian paths and adjacent buildings; and should not be located along or within 30 feet of the ground floor street frontage

**DG-13 Screening of Refuse.** Refuse bins and other waste containers should be completely concealed from view of the public right-of-way. They should be placed indoors, located away from the street, and/or completely screened from view with features such as fences or plants.

**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 trees and/or off-street parking.
- Locate residential units generally above the freeway level.
- Orient courtyards and units with operable windows and balconies along 7th Street, so that they face away from the freeway. Windows facing the freeway, which may offer views of the San Francisco Bay, should be mechanically ventilated.
- Ensure sufficient noise attenuation, consistent with City of Oakland standards.
- Consider installation of sound walls or additional planting.
- 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.

### Building Massing and Scale

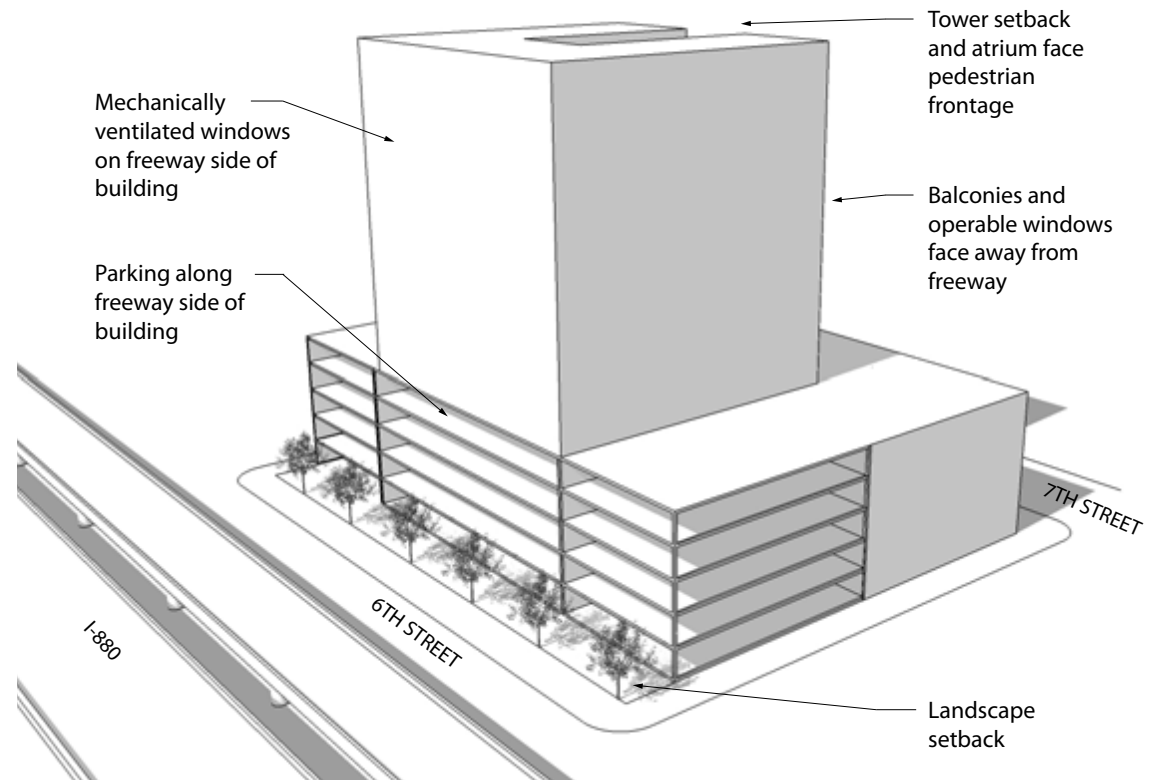
Building massing and scale have a great impact on neighborhood compatibility. Guidelines seek to ensure integration of new buildings into the existing character of the area, while allowing for more intense development and taller buildings. New buildings and additions should reinforce the historic pattern, and a coordinated combination of strategies, as described below, should also be used to reduce the scale of new buildings and to add visual interest.

### Massing and Scale

**DG-16 Three-dimensional Articulation.** Articulate building mass and surfaces with three-dimensional elements that reduce apparent bulk and create visual interest:

- Rooftops should include visually distinctive features such as curvilinear or stepped forms that soften the tops of buildings, cornices, or other architectural forms.
- Incorporate features such as balconies, recesses, windows, window frames, reveals, brackets, bay win-

**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 recesses, projections, and other three-dimensional variations in façades, such as balconies, bay windows, piers, and cornices (DG-16).*

dows, cornices at the roof and the top of the ground floor, and piers at corners and structural bays to create a play of light and shadow.

- 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 that correspond to the internal function of the building and articulate a distinct building base, middle, and top. 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:

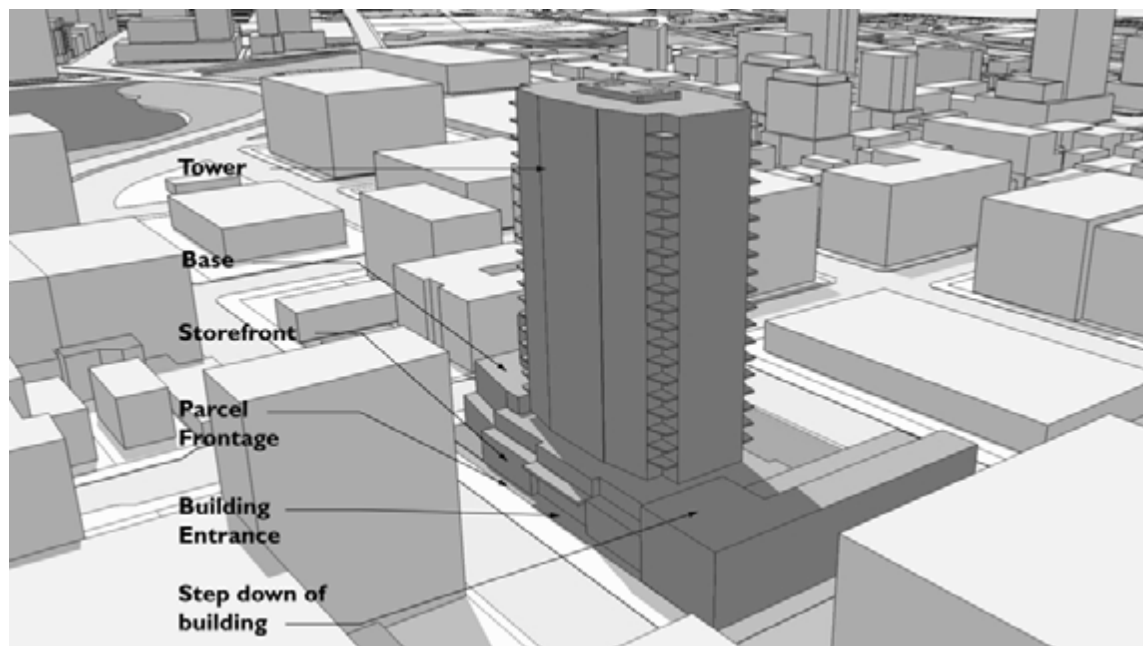
- Dividing high-rise massing to reduce overall bulk and/or step down towards lower adjacent structures, as shown in Figure 4.
- Incorporating architectural elements, such as cornices, to add horizontal consistency to the street wall.

**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**



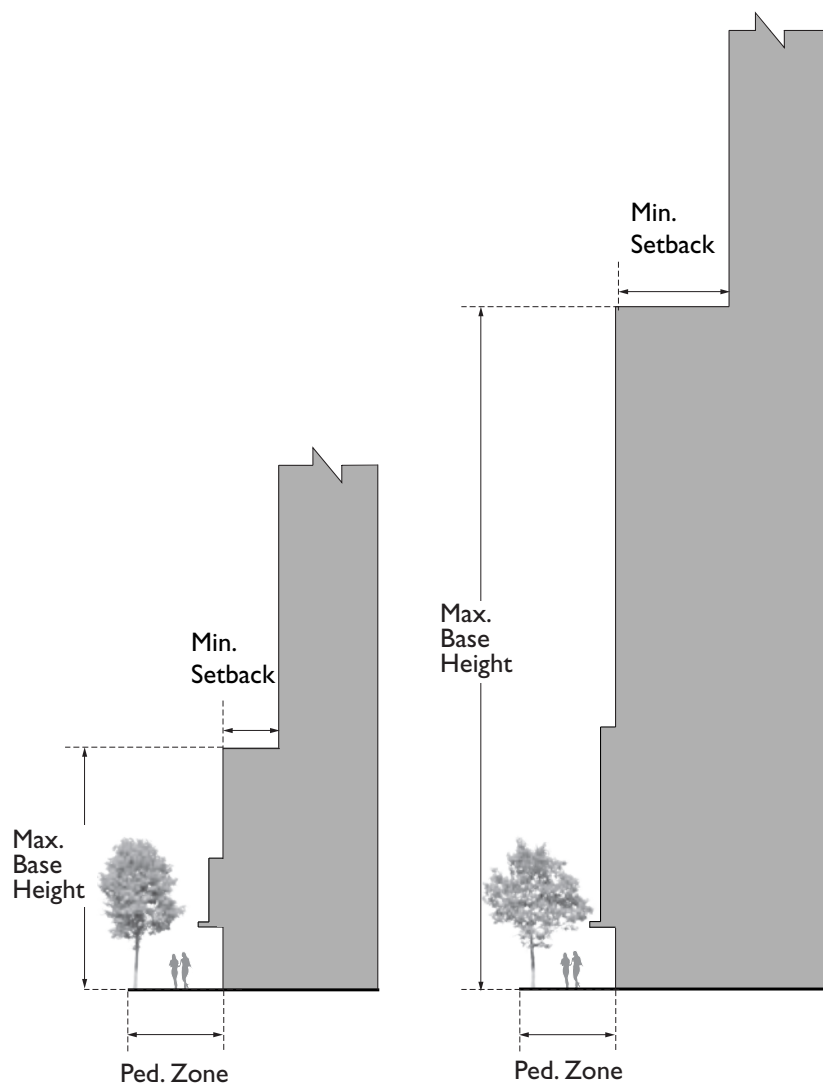
Where the height of new development exceeds the height of existing adjacent buildings, smooth transitions can be achieved by dividing high-rise massing to reduce overall bulk and/or step down towards lower adjacent structures (DG-18).



In order to reduce the apparent scale of new development when adjacent to lower existing buildings, step down the height of new building, align its facade with the existing building, and incorporate architectural details to smooth the transition between the new and existing architecture (DG-18).



Figure 5: STEP BACK ABOVE THE BASE 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.

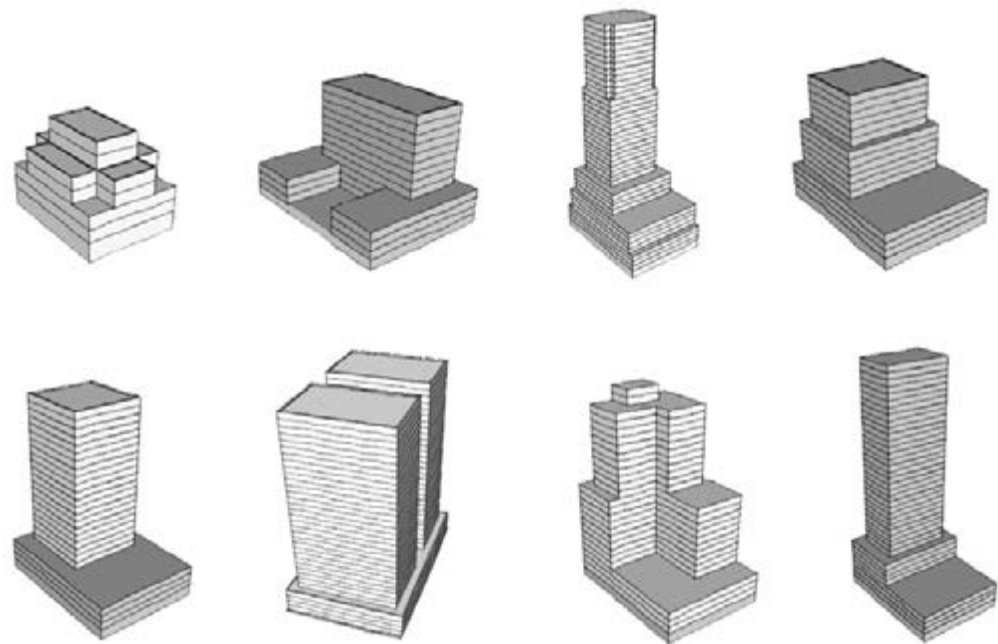
**DG-22 Slender Towers.** Towers should be slender in order to minimize the casting of large shadows and reducing apparent bulk from the street level. Towers should taper, step back, or otherwise employ a reduction in massing above the allowable base height, as shown in Figure 6.

**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. Consider separating upper stories into two or more towers to reduce apparent bulk, maintain views, and minimize shadows.

**DG-24 Distinguish Tower Design.** Additional step-backs and/or architectural detailing should be employed at the top of the tower to create a distinguished building profile.

**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



*In order to limit the visual impact of towers and other bulky buildings, preserve views, and minimize shadows, upper stories should step back from the street frontage, taper, maintain a slender profile, and be adequately spaced.*

## 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 rein-





*Slender and tapered towers and appropriate spacing between towers minimize shadows, preserve views, and offer privacy to residents (DG-22 and DG-23, top and bottom). Distinguished architectural detailing at the top of towers enhances the City skyline (DG-25, top).*

*Stepping back upper stories reduces the apparent bulk of buildings from the street level, and creates smooth transitions between buildings when stepped down to the height of adjacent buildings (DG-18, DG-19 and DG-22). Additional and creatively designed step backs distinguish building profiles and increase visual interest (DG-24, bottom left, top and bottom right).*

force 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.

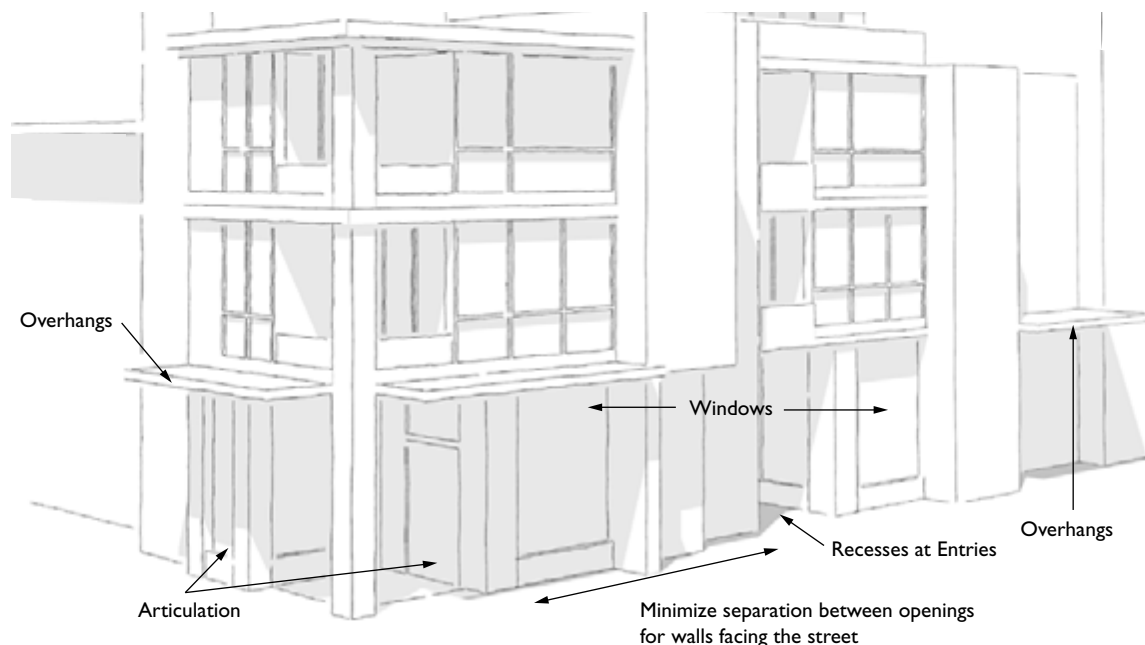
**DG-28 Articulation.** Incorporate architectural articulation along the length of the façade, and recesses at building entrances, plazas, private open space, etc.

**DG-29 Distinct Ground Floor.** The ground floor should be distinguished from upper stories through some combination of enhanced detailing, lighting fixtures, cornices, awnings, canopies, and/or other elements.

**DG-30 Ground Floor Entrances.** Carefully design entrances to be distinct and prominent features of a building, particularly lobby entrances.

- At least one prominent pedestrian entrance should be provided for each building and face the principle street. Main entrances should always face the principal street, not parking lots.
- A clear, hierarchical distinction should be made between primary entrances and secondary entrances. Main entrances should be larger than other doors on the façade and clearly

**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 and DG-28).*

- impart a sense of prominence through architectural detailing and other ornamentation, such as projections or recesses, changes in materials, awnings, lintels, stairs, and/or other distinctive details. Such architectural details should be consistent with the style of the building.
- The entrance for nonresidential buildings should be at grade.

- Historic entrance patterns should be respected.

**DG-31 Window Coverage and Design.** Ample placement of windows above the ground floor is required on all street-fronting facades, with limited exceptions for specific visual or aesthetic objectives. Whenever possible, windows should be placed on all sides of a tower. Placement, proportions, and design of windows





Primary building entrances should be designed as prominent features through architectural detailing, such as projections, recesses, changes in materials, awnings, lintels, stairs, and other distinctive features. Entrances for nonresidential buildings should be at grade (DG-30).

dows should contribute to a coherent and appealing composition, 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, recesses, and/or transom windows 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 overhangs 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:

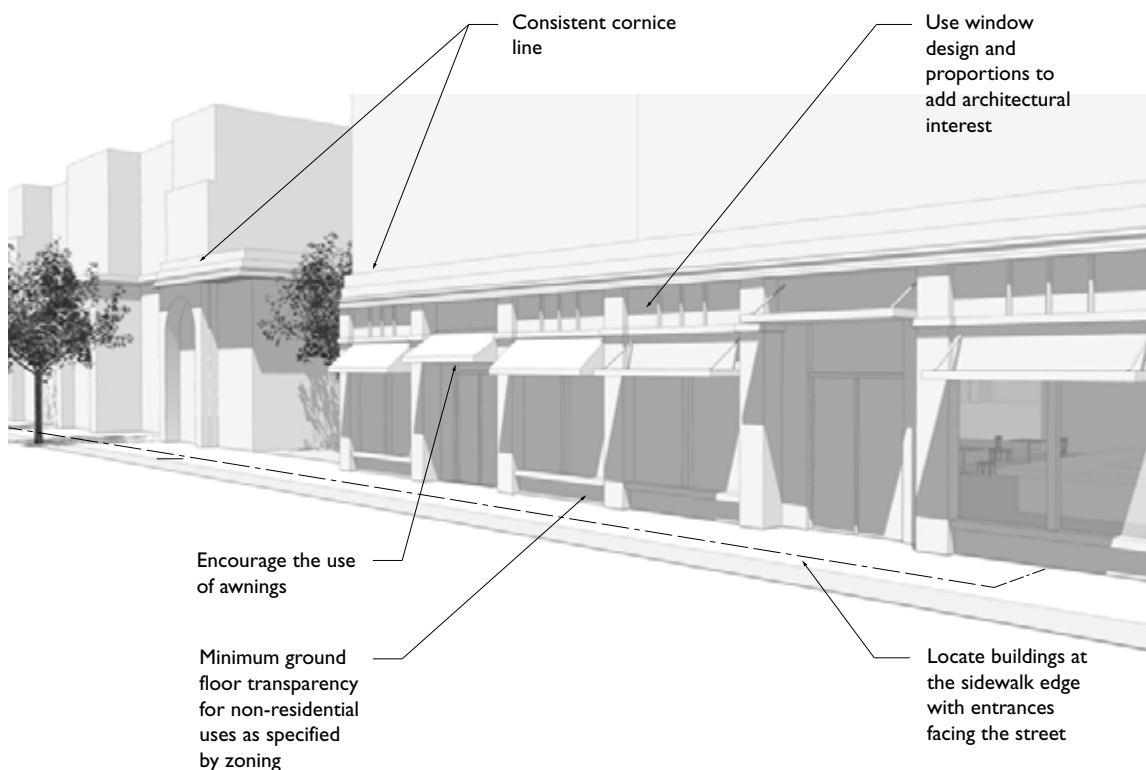
- In scale with the building, and divided into sections to reflect major vertical divisions of the façade.
- Placed below the ground-floor cornice line (or below the sills of second floor windows if no cornice exists). Avoid covering transom windows and other architectural elements.
- Designed to be 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:

- 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.

**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-31 through DG-35 and DG-38).*

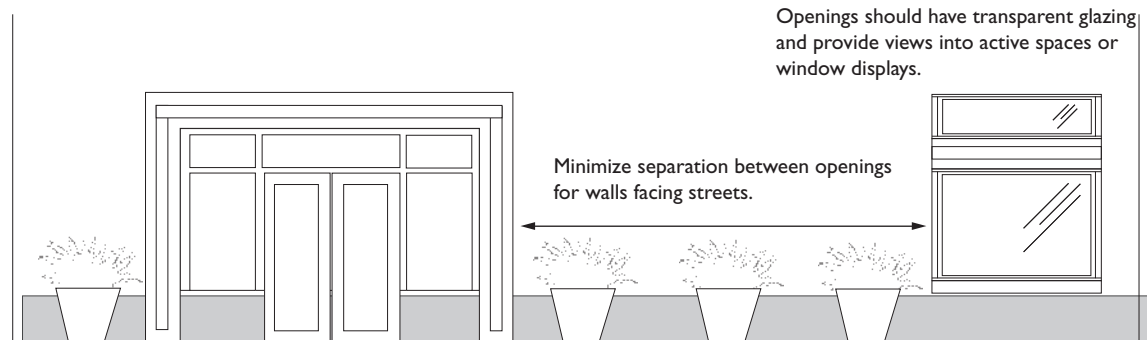


*Use awnings to provide shade, shelter, and visual interest on pedestrian-oriented retail streets. Awnings should be decorative and complementary to the building design, divided into sections to reflect vertical facade divisions, placed below transom windows (DG-35).*



Large display windows and articulated storefront facades (top), roll-up doors that fully open storefronts to the sidewalk (middle), and sidewalk vending (bottom) make for a lively and inviting pedestrian realm (DG-39).

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).

- 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, planting treatments, 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.** Design storefronts to create an active and inviting pedestrian realm.

- 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.
- Display windows should enliven the street and provide pedestrian views into the interior of the storefront. Consider installing operable windows or stacking doors that allow the full length of the storefront to be opened to the sidewalk.



- Do not use security gates, bars, grilles, or doors that are visible during business hours. Use permeable bars, gates, and grilles instead of opaque roll up doors and install them inside storefront windows. Maintain natural metallic finishes or coordinate colors with storefront trim.

**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) that divides the facade into traditional storefront widths.
- Incorporate an appropriate level of design detail, provide cohesive signage that is integrated into the design, and ensure 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.



*Interrupt blank walls with creative treatments, such as murals (DG-38, top). Provide fenestration and architectural detailing to break up large storefront facades into smaller widths (DG-40, middle), and encourage a multi-story format for large retail establishments (DG-40, bottom).*



*Outdoor seating at dining establishments (DG-41) and views of indoor space (DG-39) activate the street.*

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

- 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.

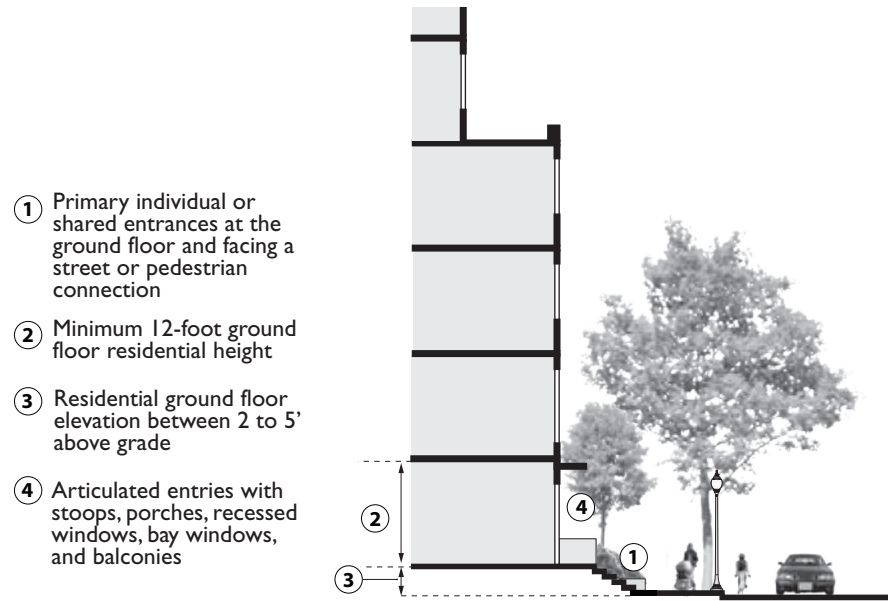
Where ventilation systems are necessary, include a minimum of two operable windows where feasible and use energy-efficient and low emission heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

**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 landscaped areas that consist of walks, patios, barbecue areas, playgrounds, recreational facilities, turf, plantings, 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).*

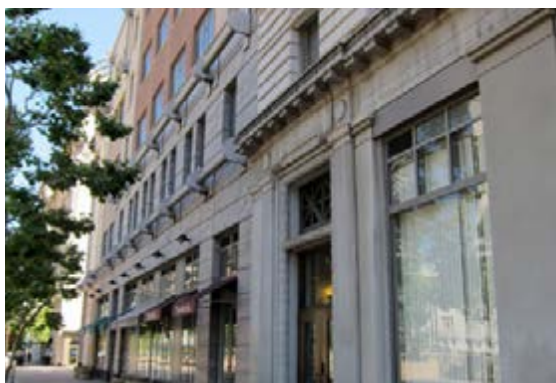


*Multi-family developments should contain shared spaces that consist of landscaped areas, walks, patios and other improvements (DG-57).*



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





*Development that is adjacent to historic buildings should be appropriately scaled, reinforce the street wall, and maintain the rhythm of facade articulation as expressed through fenestration, cornices, floor heights, and other features (DG-58 through DG-62).*

## 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. 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 remodellings 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:

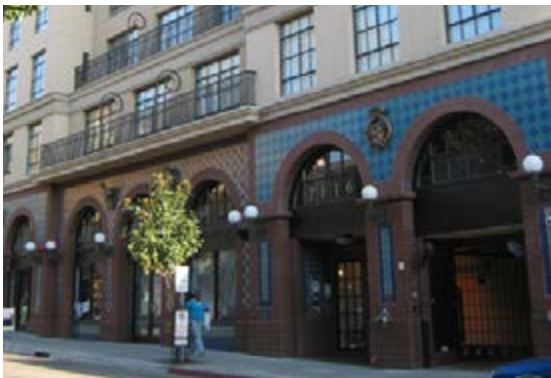
- Work within the existing building envelope is recommended; where additions are desired, they should generally be located on a secondary or rear façade.
- Retain and repair historic materials and architectural details, and avoid covering these with cladding, awnings, or signage.
- Identify historic materials and features, using historic photos when available, in order to preserve and rehabilitate historic character.
- 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 and rehabilitate historic resources.



*Preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures is encouraged (DG-67 and DG-68, top and middle) with additions requiring sensitive treatment. New buildings in the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District should relate to the historic distinguishing features of the district (DG-65, 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, glass, and architectural concrete. Glazed tile should be considered for resisting graffiti. Wood may be acceptable depending on its sturdiness and appearance. Stucco is not a preferred ground floor material, but if utilized in a limited way, it 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, 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, sustain-



ably 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.** To encourage visual interest at the pedestrian level, add texture and color through the use of accent materials at the ground 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.



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



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

**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.

**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.

- Avoid inclusion of phone numbers, websites, hours, and similar details on primary business signs.

**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 plantings and other landscaping elements 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 Strong Edges.** Use plantings and other landscaping elements 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 Plantings.** 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.** Plant low growing shrubs or 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

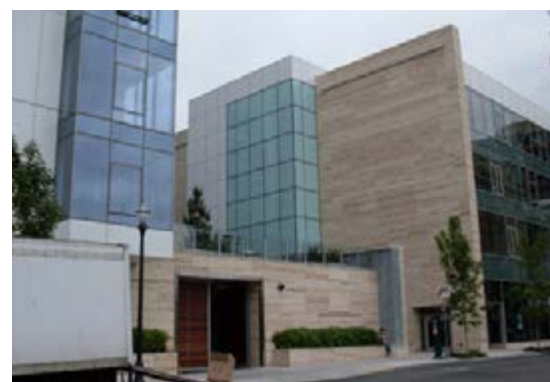
- DG-91 Location.** Where possible, locate parking structures either partly or entirely below grade. Surface parking lots should be considered temporary uses. If parking is located above ground, locate commercial building space at the street, at least 15 feet in height and 20 feet deep.
- DG-92 Vehicular 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.** Parking, loading, garage doors, driveways, and service areas should not be located on the principal

street when alternative access is feasible. Locate these elements behind buildings, below grade, encapsulated within buildings, or on secondary front-ages 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. Open parking should not be located between the sidewalk and principle building.

- 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

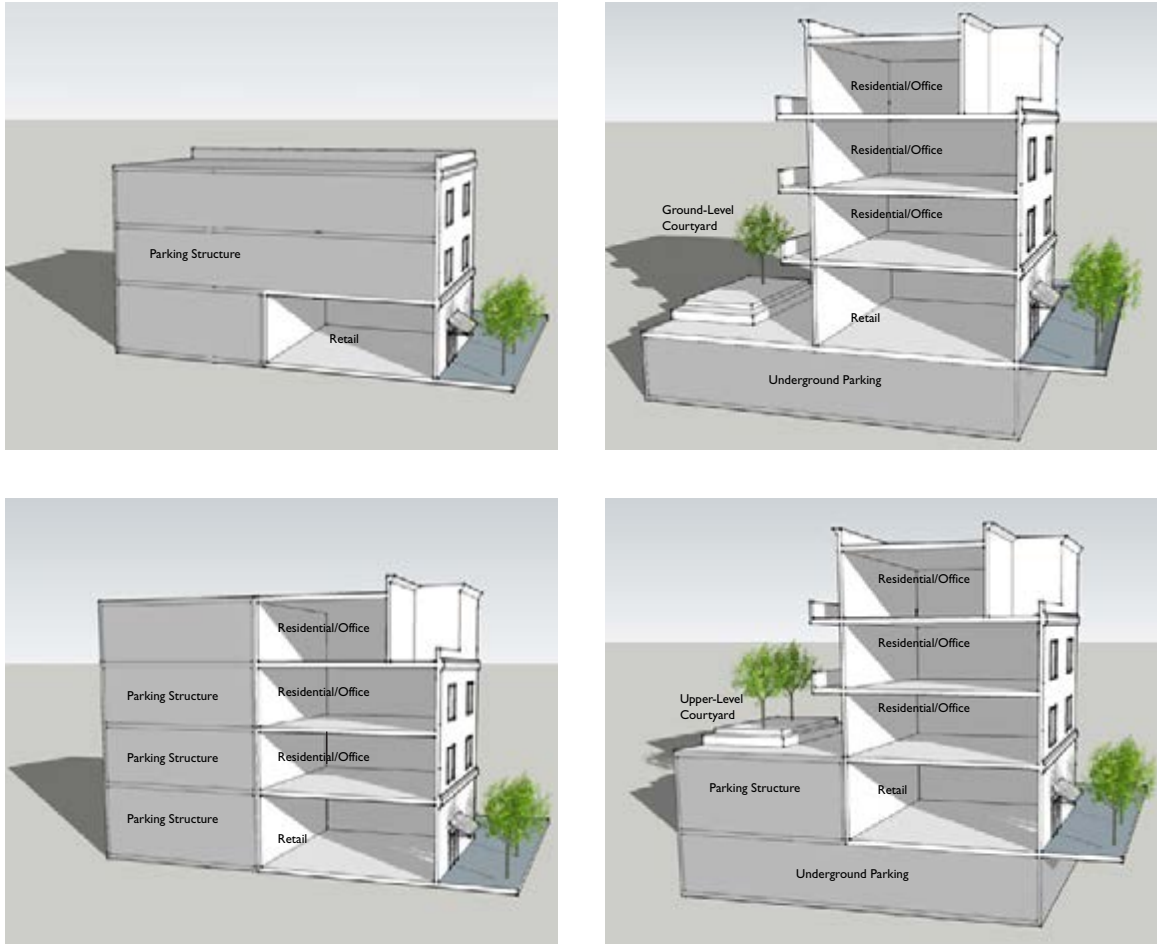
- DG-96 Parking Structures.** Ensure that structured parking does not create a void in the pedestrian environment, by incorporating the following elements:
- Structured design must maintain an interaction between building function and the streetscape through fenestration, entries, and outdoor extension 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



*Design parking structures as an integral part of the project it serves with consistent style, materials, and architectural quality. Parking garage facades and massing should complement and act as an extension of adjacent buildings. Avoid blank walls, and integrate pedestrian-oriented lighting, decorative screens, and accent landscaping. (DG-96 and DG-98)*



**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).*

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.

- 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 planted features on the parking façade that is compatible with the building design. Planting 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 other plantings;
- 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 plantings.

### 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, with plantings, 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.** Storage facilities as well as utility boxes, transformers, and lines should be completely concealed from view of the public right-of-way. They should be undergrounded wher-

ever possible in order to provide unobstructed walkways and views.

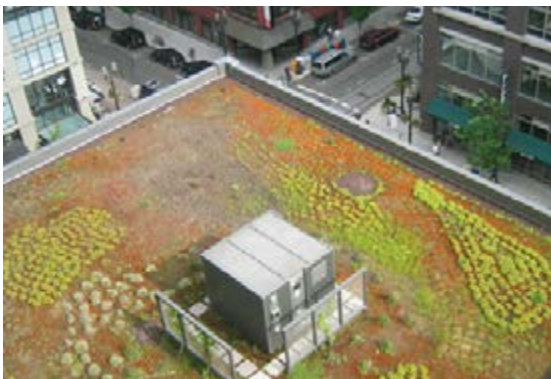
**DG-109 Undergrounding.** Support local utility providers in the undergrounding of utilities. Work with PG&E and other public agencies to underground existing overhead utility lines.

### 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



*Incorporate features for stormwater management in new development, such as green roofs, bio-retention and bio-filtration facilities, and infiltration capacity (DG-112 through DG-115).*

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.** Incorporate bio-retention facilities to 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.** Maximize the use of permeable paving 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.



## 5 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:

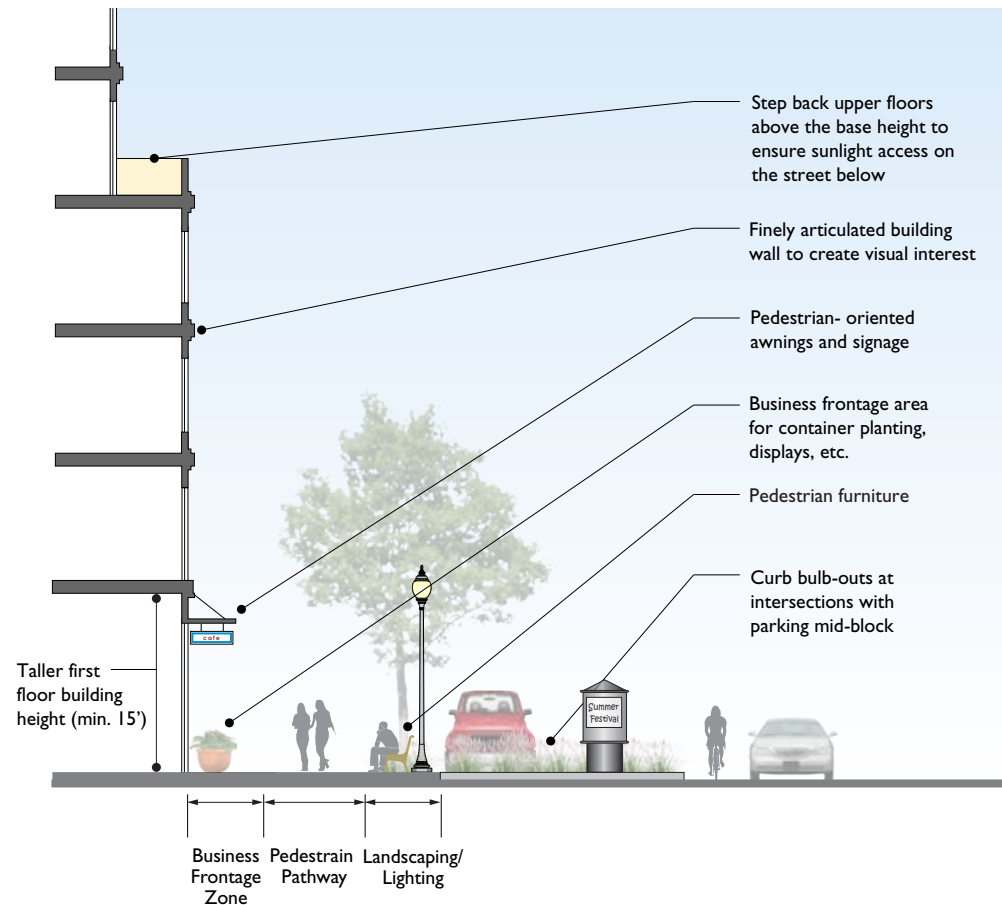
- Streetlights should be scaled for pedestrian comfort.
- Spacing of lights should be approximately 20 to 40 feet on center; 50 feet on center is acceptable if a lower-cost, reduced-impact spacing is necessary.
- Use long-life lamp bulbs.
- Streetlight luminaries should be deeply recessed, "sharp cutoff" 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 consistent with building character throughout the Plan Area, and reflective of the cultural heritage in the Chinatown Core. 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, plantings, 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 and Chinatown Core.**

The entire Plan Area supports robust pedestrian activity, and therefore should incorporate pedestrian-oriented lighting, sufficient sidewalk widths, and street tree planting. However, the Chinatown Core and the 8th, 9th, 10th, 14th, Oak, Madison, and portions of Franklin, Webster, and Harrison Street Corridors should include additional amenities to support the highest concentration of pedestrian traffic in the Plan Area. (See DG-127 and DG-128 for additional guidelines for 10th, 14th, and Oak Streets.) These streets should include as many of the following additional improvements as possible:

- Wide sidewalks
- Outdoor café and restaurant seating
- Consistent street tree species
- Consistent street furnishings, lighting fixtures, and specialty planting (planters, etc.)
- Emphasis of gateways with public art, special signage, banners, *etc.*
- 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
- Bicycle parking

Lighting, seating, signage, and other street furnishings should respond to the cultural heritage in the Chinatown Core.



*Lighting and other furnishings should respond to the cultural heritage in the Chinatown Core (top). Key pedestrian streets should include game tables to support neighborhood gathering (middle). Public art should emphasize neighborhood gateways (bottom). (DG-126).*



*Bicycle parking, curb bulb-outs, the use of paving to highlight crosswalks, and other infrastructure should support robust pedestrian activity on key pedestrian streets and in the Chinatown Core (DG-126).*





*Streetscape design should establish 14th Street as a ceremonial connection between Downtown and Lake Merritt and complement the Lake's iconic necklace of lights (DG-127, top). Decorative paving should be used on festival streets to establish the function of these streets as public plazas during road closures for special events (DG-128).*

**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 including special lighting that complements Lake Merritt's necklace of lights and distinctive plantings, sidewalk paving, and/or street furniture.

**DG-128 Streets with Special Functions.** The Plan proposes three types of special streets that should be designed with the following enhancements:

- *Festival Streets.* Festival streets are designed to accommodate temporary street closures for public activities including community events, festivals, and farmers markets. The Plan identifies Fallon Street between 8th and 10th Streets as a potential location for a festival street. These streets should include decorative road surfaces to make the street function as a public plaza during street closures, extra wide and curbsless sidewalks, reduced roadway widths, shaded areas, and additional seating.
- *Freeway Undercrossings.* The freeway undercrossings along Broadway, Webster, Jackson, Madison, and Oak Streets should be designed to increase pedestrian safety and comfort; improve wayfinding through enhanced directional signage for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers; and accommodate community events, mobile food and retail operations, and other active uses. Improvements

should include aesthetic features such as ornamental screen walls with integrated lighting, fencing, decorative paving, murals and public art. In addition to functioning as a pedestrian connection between Chinatown and the Jack London District, the Webster Street undercrossing will be reconfigured to support the Webster Green "ribbon of public spaces."

- *Green Streets.* 14th, Oak, 10th, 7th, and East 12th Streets as well as 1st Avenue provide important connections to open spaces in and surrounding the Planning Area. These streets should be designed to express a distinct "green" identity and provide opportunities for community gathering, strolling, lingering, sitting, and jogging. Design elements should include wide sidewalks, bicycle facilities, enhanced landscape design with capacity for bio-retention, additional trees and other plantings, public art, and additional seating. 10th Street should be distinguished as the most prominent of these green connections with further landscape enhancements including rain gardens and other sustainability features.

**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.

**DG-131 Furnishings:** Street furnishings should be provided to create an inviting sidewalk environment and designed to reinforce neighborhood identity. Consider opportunities afforded by wider sidewalks, including at intersections and bulb-outs, to provide pedestrian amenities. These furnishings may include:

- Seating.
- Bicycle parking.
- 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.
- Game tables (i.e., possibly Chinese chess for seniors), where there is sufficient space.
- Shelters in transit waiting areas.
- Trash and recycling receptacles.



*Design freeway undercrossings to support a range of active uses (top and middle) and with aesthetic and decorative improvements (bottom) to create spaces that function as pedestrian amenities instead of as neighborhood barriers (DG-128)*

*Streets that connect the Planning Area's open spaces should be designed to express a distinct "green" identity and provide opportunities for strolling and lingering. Features should include wide sidewalks, enhanced plantings, rain gardens, and other sustainability features (DG-128).*





Provide wayfinding kiosks in key public destinations including the Chinatown Core, and expand bilingual signage that reflects Chinatown's heritage (DG-133, top and middle). Street furnishings should reinforce neighborhood identity (DG-131, bottom).

**DG-132 Vending:** Street vending displays should 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 should be washed daily at locations with food displays and as needed at others.
- All movable display stands should 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 design elements to incorporate into the existing system.
- 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, public art, lighting, and other significant landscape 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.
- Planting 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.



*Chinatown gateways should celebrate the cultural history of the neighborhood (DG-135, top). Provide street trees throughout the planning area (DG-129, middle). Use flush-mounted grates to maintain an unobstructed pathway (DG-129, bottom).*



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

## 6 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 publicly-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 plantings and other landscaping elements 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 other plantings; 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, decking material, concrete, pavers, gravel, or other serviceable, dust-free surfacing. Slope should not exceed 10 percent.

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

**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. inter-generational 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:<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, “Shoreline Spaces: Public Access Design Guidelines for the San Francisco Bay, April 2005.





*The LA Staples Center's rooftop solar panels (top), San Francisco Federal Building's temperature-responsive natural ventilation system (middle), and LEED-certified Elihu Harris Building in Oakland (bottom) reduce energy consumption and preserve natural resources.*

## 7 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 CALGreen. Further information is available through the California Building Standards Commission website: [www.bsc.ca.gov/home/calgreen.aspx](http://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.