

From: [Tran, David](#)
To: [Hughey, Rosalynn](#)
Cc: [Ramos, Christina M](#)
Subject: RE: Following up from March 15th DANG meeting
Date: Friday, April 9, 2021 9:18:49 AM
Attachments: [Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines_historic adjacency.pdf](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Thanks so much Rosalynn! We missed you at yesterday's planning check in, weird not having you there but hope you are transitioning well into your new role!

Sincerely,



David Hai Tran

Policy & Legislative Director

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From: Hughey, Rosalynn <Rosalynn.Hughey@sanjoseca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 6:10 PM
To: Tran, David <david.tran@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: FW: Following up from March 15th DANG meeting

FYI.

From: Hughey, Rosalynn
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 6:10 PM
To: Bob Staedler <bob@svsynergy.com>; Sutherland, Kathy <kathysutherland@pacbell.net>
Cc: Severino, Lori <Lori.Severino@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: Following up from March 15th DANG meeting

Hello Bob and Kathy – hope you are doing well. While I transitioned into the Deputy City Manager role this week, I will continue to be involved in the DSAP Amendment along with Lori; it's important to see this through as we are preparing for Planning Commission and City Council hearings. I responded to Bert Weaver's email, but I also wanted to follow up directly with you from our meeting on March 15th regarding: 1) stepback planes and 2) historic adjacencies.

The Stepback Plane requirements provide new massing transition standards for tall buildings next to lower height context. The following is the language included in the revised draft plan that we will release on April 21; we are also adding the requirement for a 15-foot landscape buffer along the midblock stepback planes.

HEIGHT AND MASSING TRANSITION DESIGN STANDARDS

These additional design standards are specific to this Plan and build on the existing Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards (DDG) to facilitate development consistent with the objectives of this Plan.

Projects within the Diridon Station Area must be consistent with these standards in addition to the Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards, with exception of properties within Google's Downtown West Mixed-use Plan, which are required to comply with the Downtown West Design Guidelines and Standards (DWDSG) and the DDG Standards that are not superseded by the DWDSG.

Massing Relationship to Context (DDG Section 4.2.2)

Rationale – In some Downtown locations, tall new buildings will be adjacent to historic buildings of lower height and to properties at the edge of Downtown where the General Plan land use designations limits buildings to lower heights. In these conditions, a massing transition for the tall buildings to the lower height context, creates compatibility between new and old. Figure 2-4-7 illustrates stepback plane locations.

Stepback Plane – The primary stepback plane standards apply to the areas shown in Figure 2-4-7, which are adjacent to properties at the edge of the Diridon Station Area where mid-rise and high-rise height limits are found and where the adjacent properties have a Neighborhood Residential General Plan land use designation that limits buildings to lower heights. In order to facilitate an informed dialogue with nearby residents, development on sites affected by the stepback plane standards must provide perspective renderings from ground level, illustrating the proposed development in relation to the adjacent properties, as part of their Planning permit application.

1. Provide building stepbacks from rear shared property lines within a stepback plane of 75 degrees from horizontal.
 - For building frontage along a rear shared property line, start the stepback plane from the intersection of the rear setback line at a height of 35 feet
 - Each building stepback must be a minimum of six feet in depth.
2. Provide building stepbacks from public rights-of-way within a stepback plane of 75 degrees from horizontal.
 - For building frontage along public rights-of-way, start the stepback plane from the intersection of the front setback line at a height of 35 feet
 - Each building stepback must be a minimum of six feet in depth.

In further response to questions/concerns about historic adjacencies, the attached document are the pages from the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines that will apply to the DSAP. This includes: 1) massing relationship to context, 2) historic adjacency, 3) parking garages, and mitigating blank walls.

The changes in the Height Diagram we shared at the March 15th meeting remain the same, though we are preparing a refined map for the revised draft plan; see below.

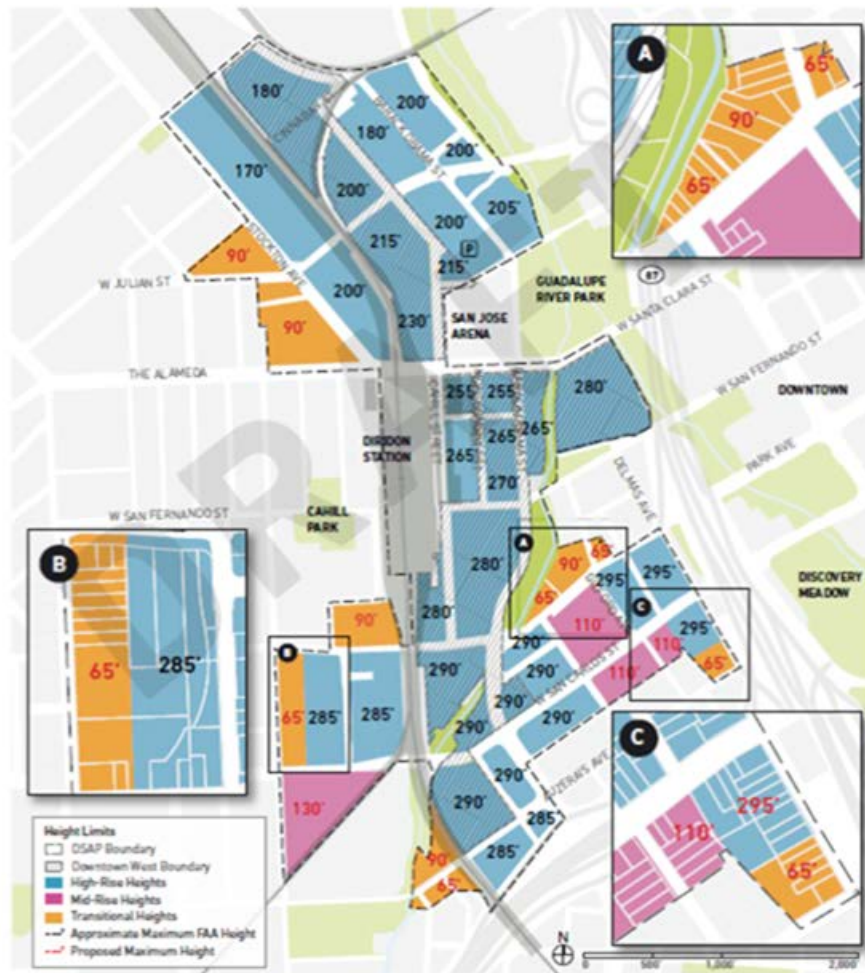


Figure 2-3-10: Building Heights

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to schedule a meeting. The revised draft DSAP amendment will be released on April 21, along with all the documents (including the Downtown West project) that will be considered by the Planning Commission on April 28th.

Best regards,
Rosalynn

Rosalynn Hughey

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4.2.2 Massing Relationship to Context

BE AUTHENTIC TO SAN JOSE

Create massing transitions between high-rises and lower-scale development.

RATIONALE

In some Downtown locations, tall new buildings will be adjacent to historic buildings of lower height and to properties at the edge of Downtown where the General Plan land use designation limits buildings to lower heights. In these conditions, a massing transition for the tall buildings to the lower height *context* creates compatibility between new and old.

GUIDELINES

- Use horizontal and vertical massing elements to complement existing context buildings.

STANDARDS

- a. **Height Transition (see Illustration a):** If a new building 100 feet tall or more is across the street from or adjacent to either:

1. A historic building 45 feet tall or less
2. A site for residential use that is limited to a building 45 feet tall or less

The new building must step back its street-facing *facade* 5 feet minimum from the front parcel or *setback* line at an elevation between 25 and 50 feet.



DO - A lower massing element creates a transition to shorter buildings nearby.

- b. **Width Transition (see Illustration b):** If a new building is across the street from or adjacent to a historic building that is both:

1. 45 feet tall or less
2. More than 30 feet narrower than the new building

The new building must create gaps in the *Podium Level* above the ground floor to divide its street-facing massing into segments no more than 30 feet wider than the widest of the applicable historic buildings. Gaps must be 5 feet minimum width and depth.

Note: There is no need to limit the massing width of a building adjacent to historic buildings that occupy their full lot width, such as historic storefronts. Thus, if a historic building's street-facing *facade* continues to within 5 feet of its parcel edges, it does not trigger the Width Transition requirement.

- c. **Rear Transition (see Illustration c):** If a new building 100 feet tall or more is across a parcel line interior to a block from either:

1. A historic building 45 feet tall or less
2. A site for residential use that is limited to a building 45 feet tall or less

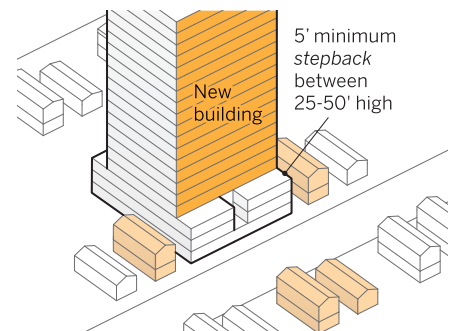
The rear portion of new building must maintain a transitional height of 70 feet or less within the first 20 feet from the property line.

RELATED GUIDELINES

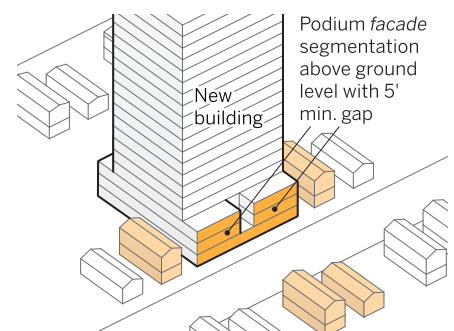
- 4.2.3 - Civic Icon Adjacency
4.2.4 - Historic Adjacency

GENERAL PLAN REFERENCE

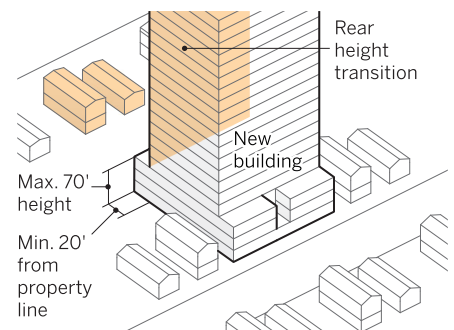
- CD-5.3, LU-9.6, LU-14.9, CD-1.14, CD-2.3, CD-4.5, CD-4.8, CD-1.12



a. **Height Transition** - Five foot *setback* at an elevation between 25 and 50 feet high



b. **Width Transition** - *Facade* segments no more than 30' wider than historic buildings



c. **Rear Transition** - Height maximum 70' within 20' of property line

4.2.4 Historic Adjacency

BE AUTHENTIC TO SAN JOSE

Incorporate essential urban and architectural characteristics of historic context.

RATIONALE

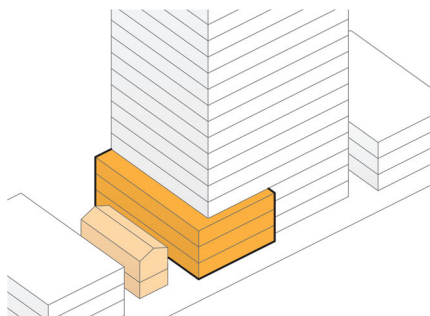
Historic buildings are a unique and irreplaceable feature of Downtown. New adjacent buildings should respect and enhance historic structures, not overwhelm them. A building with *Historic Adjacency* should respond to prominent characteristics and patterns of *Historic Context* buildings to improve the building's fit within the context.

Applicability

A site has *Historic Adjacency* when any of the these are true:

- At least 50% of buildings fully or partially within 200 feet are on the San José Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) or are eligible for HRI listing.
- The site is within 100 feet of a Designated or Candidate City Landmark or contributor to a district or conservation area.
- The site is adjacent to a historic building on the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) or eligible for HRI listing.

The building(s) within the categories above that cause a new building to have *Historic Adjacency* are the new building's *Historic Context*.



DO - Transition massing creates a relationship between buildings of different scales.

GUIDELINES

General

- Design a building with *Historic Adjacency* to stand on the quality of its own architecture, not as a backdrop for historic buildings.
- Use a *Streetscape* and landscape design that helps to unify the new and old structures.

Massing

- Use a transition massing element to relate a new building to *Historic Context* buildings below 40 feet in height on the same side of the same block. This massing may be a lower building mass forming the street wall that has a similar height to *Historic Context* buildings, with a step back to the upper *Podium Level* and *Skyline Level*. See also Section 4.2.2.

Facade

- Design the *Skyline Level* with massing and *facade* elements that reduce contrast to *Historic Context* structures.
- Design new buildings to be compatible with rear facade features and circulation patterns such as loading access and alleys established by *Historic Context* buildings.
- Use facade elements with a scale that creates visual correlation with nearby *Historic Context* building facades.

Elements

- Use distinctive architectural features in the *Podium Level* that relate to those in nearby *Historic Context* buildings.
- Place windows and doors in a rhythm that responds to the established rhythm of windows and doors of *Historic Context* buildings.



DO - The new building at rear responds to *Historic Adjacency* through materials and *fenestration*.

STANDARDS

Massing

- a. Relate *Podium Level* building massing to the scale of *Historic Context* buildings by breaking a large building into masses of similar scale to *Historic Context* buildings.
- b. Design buildings with rectilinear rather than curved and diagonal forms where rectilinear forms are typical of the *Historic Context* buildings.
- c. Use cornice articulation at the *Podium Level* at a height comparable to the heights of *Historic Context* buildings.
- d. Maintain *Streetwall* continuity with *Historic Context* buildings that are on the same side of the same street by placing the street-side facade of a new building within 5 feet of the average *Historic Context* building *Streetwall* distance from the front property line.

Facade

- e. Use articulation that creates facade divisions with widths similar to *Historic Context* buildings on the same side of the same block (if the new building is wider). A variety of techniques can achieve this articulation, including facade design, material variations, and color variations. For example, if the street facades of most nearby *Historic Context* buildings are vertical in proportion, taller than they are wide, then maintaining the vertical orientation of the building facade will result in a more compatible design.
- f. Do not simulate historic architecture to achieve these guidelines and standards. Do not design new facades to create a

false historic appearance or copy historic architectural features unless such features are integral to the design of the new construction.

- g. Place windows on *facades* visible from the windows of the adjacent *Historic Context* structure even if this requires that the *facade* be set back from the property line.

Elements

- h. Use some building materials that respond to *Historic Context* building materials, such as masonry, terra cotta, limestone, stucco, glass, mosaic, cast stone, concrete, metal, glass, and wood (trim, finishes and ornament only).
- i. The new materials should be compatible with historic materials in scale, proportion, design, finish, texture, and durability.

Ground Floor

- j. Space pedestrian entries at similar distances to *Historic Context* building entries.
- k. Create a ground floor with a similar floor to ceiling height as nearby *Historic Context* buildings, provided the ground floor finish ceiling is no lower than the minimum height identified in this document.

RELATED GUIDELINES

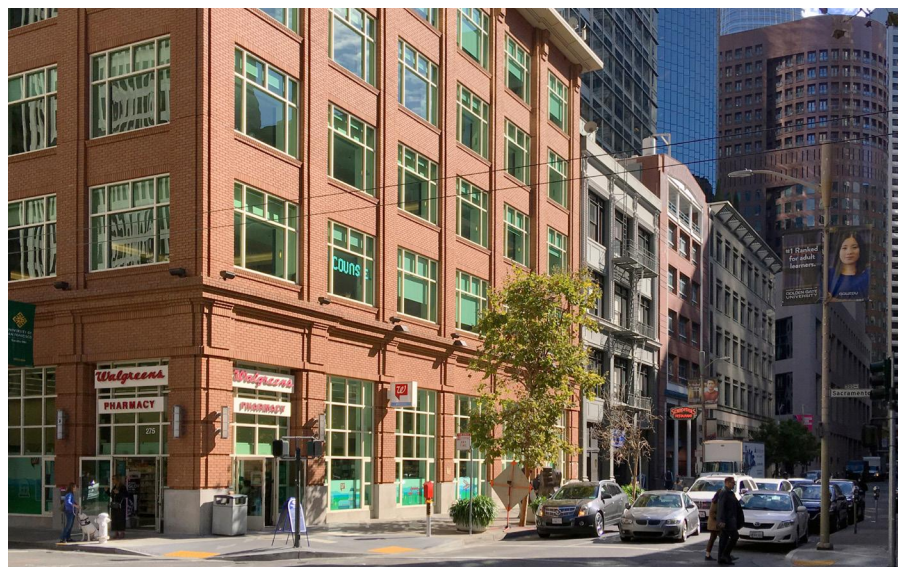
2.3 - Historic Sites and Districts Plan

4.2.2 - Massing Relationship to Context

4.2.3 - Civic Icon Adjacency

GENERAL PLAN REFERENCE

- Chapter 6 - Historic Preservation
- LU-13.5, LU-13.15, LU-15.1, VN-1.10



DO - A new building can fit into a historic context using materials, massing, and *facade* treatments that respond to existing buildings.

4.4.6 Parking Garages

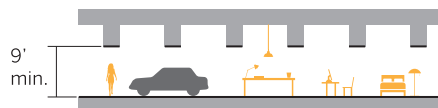
PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Minimize the negative effects of parking garages through placement, design, and screening.

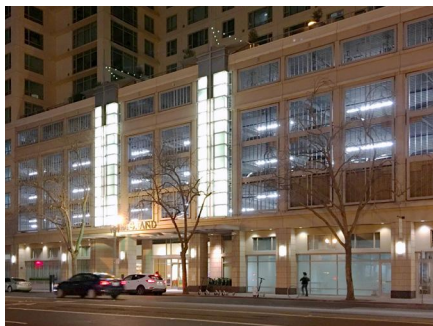
RATIONALE

Even parking garages with good architecture can create deadening effects on the surrounding urban fabric. Their size and location can separate uses and *Active Frontages*, making the city less walkable. They can also become locations for undesirable activities.

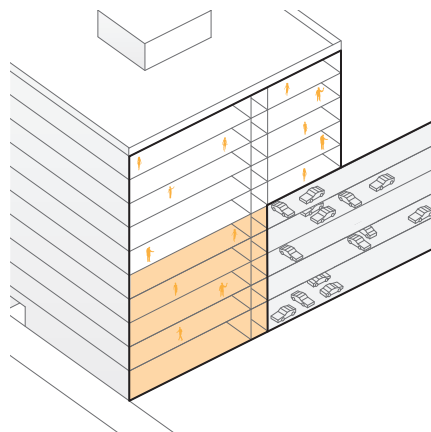
To make parking into a good neighbor, reduce the visibility of a garage and use *Occupied Space* to bridge gaps in the urban fabric. Lining parking garages with *Active Frontages* and *Occupied Space* puts the parking garage in the back and brings life to the street. Planning ahead for garage conversion into other uses may avoid the need for expensive and disruptive demolition in case parking is no longer needed due to changes in transportation technology and usage.



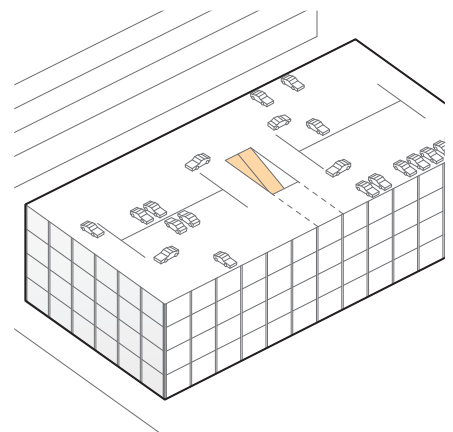
c. **DO** - Future proof garages with sufficient height to accommodate other potential uses.



DO and DO NOT - This parking garage allows harsh light to intrude onto the street. However, the building also uses creative *Podium Level* lighting to create distinction (see Section 4.4.9.a).



a. **DO** - Line a parking garage within the building mass (Section 3.4.4) with *Occupied Space* along a *Primary* or *SoFA Addressing Street* or *Urban Park/Plaza Frontage*.



b. **DO** - "Future proof" parking garages by planning for transition to other uses, such as with structurally-separate vehicle ramps, flat floors, and sufficient floor-to-ceiling heights.

GUIDELINES

- Place landscaping, green roofs, decks, *Green Stormwater Infrastructure*, patios, gardens, solar power generation, or other mitigating elements on an exposed parking garage roof to reduce the heat island effect and water runoff.
- Provide a canopy, overhang, trellis or other element to mark the top of a standalone parking garage to soften the appearance.
- Use parking garage lighting of similar light color to that of regular building uses so that the parking garage lighting is not clearly differentiable from regular lighting to avoid an institutional appearance.
- Place vehicle ramping on the interior of a parking garage, not near any facade.

- Future proof parking garages to be convertible to other uses in the future. Design structured parking with:

- Flat floors
- Minimum 9 foot floor-to-finished-ceiling clear heights
- Structurally separate vehicle ramps to allow for total or partial removal
- Sufficient structural strength to allow conversion to other uses
- Structural depth that is shallow enough to allow necessary daylight access if converted to another use (such as residential, which requires natural light in certain rooms per code), or a plan to reduce the structural depth to the necessary amount

STANDARDS

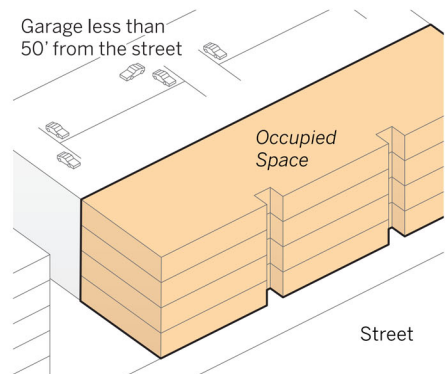
- a. If a parking garage facade is within 50 feet of a *Primary Addressing Street*, *SoFA Addressing Street*, or *Urban Park/Plaza Frontage* (see Section 2.2), line the side(s) of the structure that face those street(s) with *Occupied Space* of at least the same height as the parking garage and of at least 20 feet depth.
- b. Treat the *facade* of any exposed garage along an *Image-Defining Frontage* (see Section 2.1) with materials and design of at least comparable quality to the rest of the building, integrated with the building architecture.
- c. Design the *facade* of any exposed or standalone parking garage that faces any *Public Space* (but not alley) with an appearance similar to the *facade* of a commercial or residential building. Use window openings or glazing modules of a similar size and shape as those of an office or residential building (typically with a vertical rather than horizontal orientation), and use *facade* materials of similar quality.
- d. Screen building lighting of a parking lot or parking garage such that it does not cast direct light on *Public Space* or on nearby buildings. Note that zoning also regulates light trespass from parking lot lighting, particularly onto residential properties. See the San José Zoning Code for details.
- e. Screen a parking garage so that vehicle headlights do not shine onto windows of neighboring buildings or buildings across a street or other public space, including when vehicles are traveling up or down a ramp.
- f. Provide vehicles a place to stop while exiting a parking garage that gives drivers a clear view of pedestrians on the sidewalk and pedestrians a clear view of approaching vehicles.
- g. Design a garage entry so that anticipated vehicle queuing does not cross any *Public Space*.
- h. Exhaust garage venting to the top of the garage or, if not possible, above the second level and directed away from *Public Space* and neighboring structures.

RELATED GUIDELINES

- 3.4.4 - Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Location
- 3.5.3 - Parking and Vehicular Access Location
- 4.4.4 - Mitigating Blank Facades
- 5.3.1.b - Mitigating Blank Walls
- 5.4 - Surface Parking Lots
- 5.5.2 - Vehicle and Service Entry Design

GENERAL PLAN REFERENCE

- MS-2.6, MS-2.7, CD-4.12, CD-1.17, CD-2.11



DO - Line a parking garage within 50 feet of a *Primary Addressing Street*, *SoFA Addressing Street*, or *Urban Park/Plaza Frontage* with *Occupied Space*.



DO - Design the *facade* of a parking garage with high quality materials and architectural treatments.



DO - Treat the *facade* of an exposed parking garage with materials and design similar to the rest of the building and extend the tower facade to ground level (see Section 4.3.1).



DO NOT - Exposed parking diminishes the *Public Realm* even if the garage is decorated.

5.3.1.b Mitigating Blank Walls

FOCUS ON THE GROUND FLOOR

Avoid long Blank Walls facing the Public Realm. Where a Blank Wall is unavoidable, work to mitigate its impact.

RATIONALE

A ground floor *Blank Wall* has no *Active Frontage*. This includes walls with windows to non-Occupied Space, such as a parking garage. Note that windows to parking above the ground level **do count** to avoid creation of a *Blank Facade* (see Section 4.4.4).

Blank Walls deaden the street environment, make *Public Space* less safe and inviting, and reduce a retail area's potential by creating breaks between activities. They provide opportunities for undesirable activities such as graffiti.

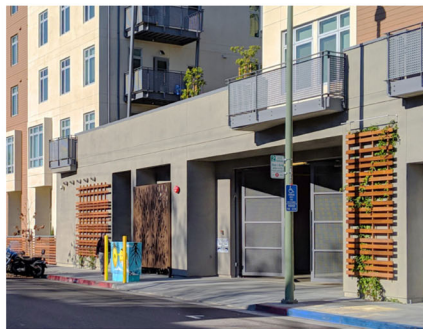
Where a building has a *Blank Wall* for unavoidable reasons, use design treatments to increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and interest. Preference is given to treatments that reduce the length of *Blank Wall*, such as small retail spaces for food bars, news-stands, and other specialized retail tenants. Architectural treatments make the space more interesting for pedestrians but do not create the safety and usefulness that comes with an *Active Frontage*.

GUIDELINES

- Use architectural treatments such as reveals, small setbacks, indentations, or other means to break up a *Blank Wall* along *Public Space*. Avoid creation of blind spots that may feel unsafe to pedestrians when the street is less busy. Use these treatments for *Blank Walls* along property lines as well where they are exposed without an abutting building.
- Use different textures, colors, or materials to break up a *Blank Wall's* surface.



DO NOT - Long *Blank Walls* are discouraged. Architectural treatments may provide some relief but reducing the length of *Blank Walls* is of primary importance.



DO - Mitigate *Blank Walls* with features to add interest at the *Pedestrian Level*.



DO - Art can have local meaning as well as reduce the impact of a *Blank Wall*.

STANDARDS

- Mitigate a *Blank Wall* longer than 30 feet with one or more of the following:
 - Public (preferably interactive) art on at least 100 square feet and 10 linear feet of the wall
 - Art exhibition display window
 - Merchandising or regularly-changing public information display case or window
 - Special lighting, canopy, awning, trellis, planter, or other pedestrian-oriented feature.

RELATED GUIDELINES

- 4.4.4 - Mitigating Blank Facades
- 5.2 - Public Art in Private Development
- 5.3.1.a - Active Frontages
- 5.3.4 - Lighting - Pedestrian Level

GENERAL PLAN REFERENCE

- TN-1.4, VN-1.7, CD-1.11, CD-2.3