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July 30, 2020

Leila Hakimizadeh
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara St.
Tower, 3rd Floor
San José, CA 95113

RE: Draft San Jose Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines

Ms. Hakimizadeh,

We would like to thank the City for allowing comment on the draft Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines. We appreciate the time and effort that goes into such an extensive and important document.

As you may be aware, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority is actively planning to develop several hundred affordable housing units within the City of San José. We hope to receive our planned development permit on our Bellarmino Park and Alvarado Place developments in August. These developments will provide over 200 affordable housing units to the City's stock. Additionally, we are actively designing and planning for four affordable housing developments along East Santa Clara and East St. John Streets between 14th and 16th Streets. Combined, these developments will provide upwards of 400 affordable housing units. These developments are far along in the schematic design phase and we intend to submit for preliminary review on all four within the coming months.

While we applaud the City for providing such robust design standards and guidelines, there are several open-ended questions and potential problems we see. Our architect, David Baker Architects, extensively reviewed the Draft Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines and provided questions and comments (attached). Several of the issues directly impact the design of our East Santa Clara projects, should the City approve the standards as drafted. We are concerned that these changes would have negative results on our development plans, not limited to fewer affordable housing units, increased costs, and long-term maintenance risks. As the City is aware, it is becoming more and more difficult to deliver affordable units and even more difficult to deliver them at a reasonable cost.

We respectfully request that the City review the attached comments and questions and consider making the needed adjustments to the final Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pedram Farashbandi, Associate at David Baker Architects, at pedramfarashbandi@dbarchitect.com or Natalie Monk, Project Manager for the Santa Clara County Housing Authority, at Natalie.Monk@SCCHousingAuthority.org.

As always, we greatly appreciate the City's partnership in responding to the severe housing affordability crisis.

Sincerely,

Katherine Harasz
Executive Director
Santa Clara County Housing Authority

CC: Jacky Morales-Ferrand, City of San José

Enclosure: Memorandum from David Baker Architects

David Baker Architects
dbarchitect.com

461 Second Street Loft c127
San Francisco, CA 94107

MEMORANDUM

2020-07-24

FROM: Pedram Farashbandi, AIA
TO: Leila Hakimizadeh, City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113
RE: Questions and Comments on Proposed Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines

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Dear Leila Hakimizadeh,

Thank you for providing an opportunity for David Baker Architects to share feedback on the proposed Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines (CDSG). Following the July 24, 2020 Developers and Designers Focus Group meeting, we are issuing you this memo to summarize our questions and comments.

1.1.2 Applicability

Question 1 - How do the CDSG relate to Zoning controls? Which supersedes which?

Q2 - What is the status of the Mixed Use Zoning Class?

Q3 - Previously, residential open space requirements were in the Residential Design Guidelines. There are no open space requirements in the new CDSG. What are the open space requirements? And, when will they be shared?

Q4 - Leila Hakimizadeh (CSJ) said the CDSG would go to council for approval in the Fall of 2020. When will the CDSG become enforceable? If a project processes a Preliminary Review Request just before the CDSG are enforceable, will the Preliminary Review feedback remain valid after the CDSG are approved? And, will the eventual Site Development Permit be subject to the CDSG?

Q5 - Does the final bullet point in the Exceptions to Standards intend to only allow a project to apply for a single exemption? “The proposed project meets ***all*** other standards and guidelines in the Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines.”

Q6 - How does the Exceptions to Standards section relate to the State Density Bonus for Affordable Housing Law? Are Exceptions in addition to or instead of Density Bonus Waivers and concessions?

2.3.1 Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Q1: Please clarify the difference between a “publicly-accessible open space” which is permitted as an entry point (S3) and an “internal private courtyard” (S5) which is not permitted as an entry point. We often find it desirable to enter a multi-family lobby from a forecourt. Is the threshold for conformance whether or not a security gate is present?

Comment 1: S4 requires “direct access” from “common amenities.” In a multi-family housing project, it may be undesirable and create security issues for a common amenity like a laundry room or common room to provide a door which opens up onto a public street. Consider removing this control.

2.3.2 Driveways and Vehicle Drop-offs

Q1: S2 requires all driveways to be within 25 feet of each side property line for mid-block parcels. Please clarify the reasoning behind this control and the origin of the 25 feet to side property line limit. To optimize parking - especially considering other controls in the CDSG which require wrapping parking with active uses, a driveway may need to be located closer to the center of a site.

Q2: S4 requires "one driveway ***on each street*** for corner parcels." Is this requiring two driveways for corner parcels? Do projects have the option to only provide one driveway, if desired?

2.4.2 Active Frontages

C/Q1: S2 defines bedrooms as non-active frontage and limits the amount of frontage which bedrooms can occupy. This control discourages larger family-suitable units. DBA disagrees with this standard's suggestion that larger family-suitable units are in conflict with the guiding principle of this section, to "enhance the character of streets and public open space." Please clarify CSJ's reasoning to categorize bedrooms as non-active frontage.

2.4.3 Paseos

C1: A maximum 60ft-wide pedestrian and bike-only paseo is extremely wide for a non-vehicular passage and will exclude crucial developable area. Rincon Place in San Francisco is a 40ft-wide paseo between two tall buildings, and the paseo's width to height proportions are successful. Consider reducing the maximum paseo width to 40ft.

Q2: Please clarify "public use" in standard S7, which requires a public access easement dedication to the City for a paseo intended for public use. Is the threshold for public whether or not a security gate is present?

2.4.5 Bicycle Parking

Q1: Please clarify the intent behind S1 requiring all bicycle parking to be located on the ground floor. Especially on small sites, bicycle parking may be better located on other floors and still be safe and convenient.

Q2: S5 requires lounges, repair stations, lockers, changing rooms, and showers. Zoning Code section 20.90.066 and Table 20-216 list the requirements for showers and changing rooms in warehouse, general industrial, and office uses. What are the requirements for lounges, repair stations, and lockers? S5 applies this requirement to "residential (only for employees)." Zoning Code Table 20-216 does not list residential use requirements, please provide direction.

2.4.6 Vehicular Parking and Surface Parking

C1: S1 and S2 require the first parking stall in a surface lot to be some distance away from the lot entrance to prevent car overflow into the street. If CSJ's intent is to prevent overflow, consider that this requirement should be tied to the size of the parking lot and size of the site. For example, if a small site only has 10 parking spaces, setting the first stall back 50 feet from the driveway access per S1 would be extremely inefficient and would exclude crucial developable area.

2.4.8 Landscaping and Stormwater Management

C1: S4 appears to negatively impact projects that provide more landscaped areas. Local stormwater treatment requirements (C.3) already govern the amount of LID required to adequately treat the rainfall which lands on a project site. Requiring additional area dedicated to LID would be redundant.

C2: G5 is a very broad statement. Certain soil conditions or traffic loading could make this infeasable. Consider adding the statement of "where feasible" to the end of this requirement to address these situations.

3.1.1 Massing Relationship to Context

C1: Stepback controls are an expensive and inefficient burden on multi-family housing. This document shows one existing building precedent in this section which has a stepback. All of the other dozens of images of multi-family housing in this document do not comply with the stepback control you are imposing. Please consider that this control impedes the feasibility of housing.

3.1.2 Form, Proportion, and Scale

C1: There is no incentive to use the feature "Taller massing or exaggerated roof elements that do not exceed height limits," listed under S1 as a strategy to signify a special frontage. If mandating that the height limit cannot be exceeded, to use this strategy, the rest of a building would have to decrease in height, reducing the developable envelope. Consider either removing this suggested feature from the list, or allowing for a small exception to the height limit.

Q1: S2 only lists "entry porches, awnings, and bays" as elements to reduce the scale of buildings. There are many other elements which break down the scale of a building including balconies, sunshades, and material changes. Why is this list limited?

Q2: S4 requires a side yard between residential developments and other uses. How does this side yard requirement relate to yard requirements in the UVPs and Zoning Code?

Q3: S5 requires "breaks in facades (either vertical or horizontal) must be at least two feet wide for facades over 50 feet in height." Please clarify what "either vertical or horizontal" means. Is there a depth requirement for the two-foot wide break? Is there a frequency requirement for the two-foot wide break?

3.2.1 Pedestrian and Bicycle Entrances Design

Q1: For ground floor residential units, S4 sets a minimum elevation of 1 foot above grade and a maximum elevation of 4 feet above grade. Please share the intent behind the maximum of 4 feet. Is the height measured at each unit entrance? Consider that it would be extremely difficult and a great financial expense to comply with this obligation on a site which slopes more than 3ft.

3.2.2 Vehicular Entrances and Driveways:

C1: S3 requires a “minimum 50-foot-long driveway... to avoid queuing of cars into the public right-of-way.” If CSJ’s intent is to prevent overflow, consider that this requirement should be tied to the size of the parking lot, size of the site, and whether or not a security gate is present. For example, if a small site only has 10 parking spaces, setting the first stall back 50 feet from the driveway access per S3 would be extremely inefficient and would exclude crucial developable area.

3.2.3 Services and Utilities Entrances and Design

Q/C1: Why are the CDSG establishing loading aisle minimum widths? Aisle minimums should be based on space required for the vehicles using the loading area. In line with this section’s Rationale, consider establishing loading aisle ***maximum*** widths.

3.3.2 Roofs and Parapets

C1: One design strategy listed under S3 is “Vary the parapet height articulations by a minimum of two feet.” Varying the parapet height will create waterproofing issues and building maintenance system conflicts. Consider removing this suggested feature from the list.

Q1: Another design strategy listed under S3 says “Do not provide railings at roofs for greater than 20% of facade length unless designed to be 80% solid so as to act as a screen.” Please share the intent behind this.

C2: S4 requires a minimum of 30% of the roof area for green roof strategies. Consider a range of required roof percentages based on the proportions of a building. For example, 30% is easily achievable on a tower with a small footprint - yet, it is extremely difficult to achieve on a short building with a large footprint.

3.3.3 Decks and Balconies

Q/C1: Please share the intent behind the minimum 16-foot clearance above the public realm for balconies (S4). Is this requiring a 16-foot tall first floor? Consider that with a 16-ft ground floor a project is limited to 6 stories above the ground floor before high-rise code requirements are triggered. If the ground floor is reduced to 14-ft tall, a project can have 7 stories above the ground floor before high-rise code requirements are triggered.

3.3.4 Awnings, Sunshades, and Screens

C1: S2 only lists “sunshades, awnings, and screens” as methods to provide shade for windows. Recessing the window is another method to provide ample shade. Consider changing the language to list “any means which provide shade.”

3.3.5 Parking Garage Design

Q1: S1 requires parking structures to be wrapped with active frontages including “retail stores, management offices, gym, and amenities.” Residential units are not listed. Please confirm if residential units are considered “active frontages”, which can wrap a garage.

3.3.7 Materials and Color

Q1: Please clarify the intent behind S4 to “not provide unbroken multi-story sections of the same paint color for more than 150 feet of facade length and more than two-thirds of the number of floors in height.” Does this only apply where “paint” is applied or to all cladding? It is unclear whether this is controlling the vertical or horizontal pattern of cladding.

4.1.1 Commercial and Industrial Frontages

Q1: S4 requires that “all windows and clear glazing on the ground floor facade must be at least 10 feet tall.” What is the intent behind the regulation of 10 feet tall? A sloping site may result in a floor to ceiling height of less than 10 feet, which would impede conformance to this standard.

Q2: S5 requires ground floor commercial tenant spaces to be “at least 45 feet deep for a minimum of 50 percent of a primary street building facade.” What is the intent behind the regulation of 45 feet deep? Retail viability is related to frontage length rather than depth. And, smaller tenant spaces with inherently lower rent fees can be more inviting to local small businesses. Separately, consider relating this standard to the size of the lot. On a small site, 45 feet deep may be impractical.

C1: S6 requires a “minimum of 16 feet floor-to-ceiling height for ground floor building frontages.” Consider that with a 16-ft ground floor, a project is limited to 6 stories above the ground floor before high-rise code requirements are triggered. If the ground floor is reduced to 14-ft tall, a project can have 7 stories above the ground floor before high-rise code requirements are triggered. Separately, ceiling heights vary based on a number of factors. Consider changing the standard to “floor-to-floor” rather than “floor-to-ceiling”.

4.1.2 Residential Frontages

Q/C1: S4 requires partially sub-grade garages along streets to “not extend more than three feet above grade.” From where is the three feet measured, especially on a sloped site? If a high water table is present, it would be very costly for a project to comply with this 3ft maximum. 4.1.2 S4 limits the podium garage to 3 feet while 3.2.1 S4 allows a unit stoop height up to 4 feet. How do these two strategies relate to one another?

4.2.2 Communal and Private Open Space Design

Q1: Please clarify figure 4.15 and the method for calculating the extents of a communal open space. In your diagram, some areas which are less than 20 ft are highlighted as part of the communal open space. And, an area which is open on the level below is not counted.

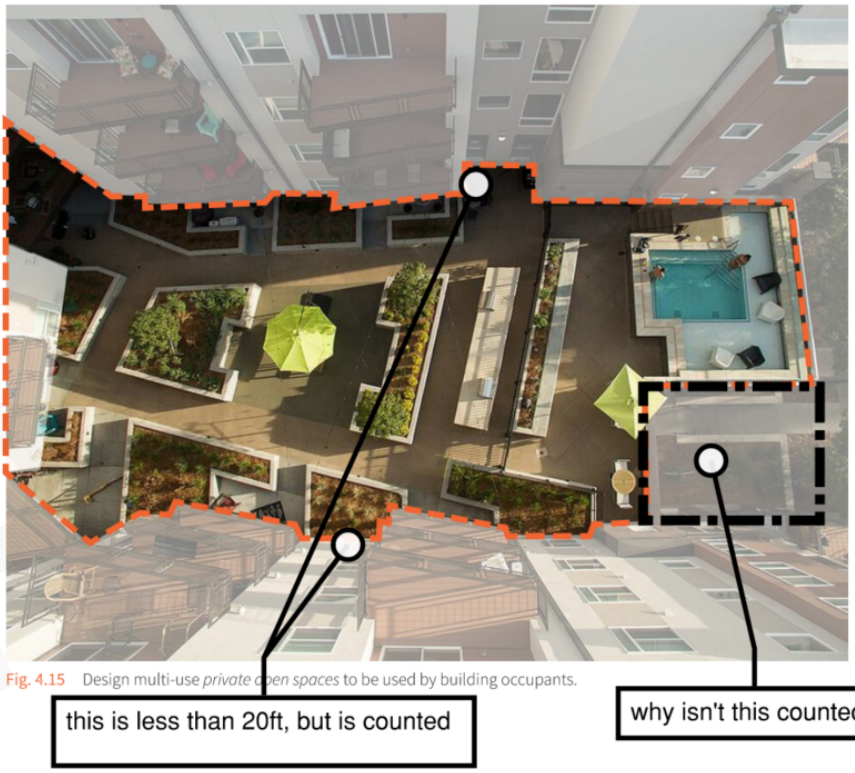

Fig. 4.15 Design multi-use *private open spaces* to be used by building occupants.

Sincerely,

Pedram Farashbandi, AIA
Associate
pedramfarashbandi@dbarchitect.com
415.355.7064

Re: DBA comments and question on "Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines"

Sarah Ahmadzai <sarahahmadzai@dbarchitect.com>

Wed 7/29/2020 2:53 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Pedram Farashbandi <pedramfarashbandi@dbarchitect.com>; Liza Court <lcourt@fletcherstudio.com>; David Fletcher <dfletcher@fletcherstudio.com>

[External Email]

Hi Leila,

Here are a few additional comments from our colleagues at Fletcher Studio on the landscape and open space guidelines:

2.4.8 Landscaping and Stormwater Management

Comment 1: Standard 1 -- We acknowledge the benefit of larger planting areas for both tree growth and pedestrian experience; however, many urban site conditions do not accommodate 10'x4' planting areas at all locations where trees would be desirable. For example, utility location and clearance buffers, parking meters and vehicular egress, and bike parking requirements often conflict with desired planting areas. Consider instead recommending planting areas where possible, and minimum tree basin dimensions where planting does not fit. For example, San Francisco Public Works recommends 4' length x (2' to 5' variable width), depending on specific sidewalk conditions (http://sfpublicworks.org/sites/default/files/622-178631%20Tree%20Planting%20Standards%202010.pdf).

C2: Consider providing tree spacing guidelines, where achievable. For example, from San Francisco Public Works: 15' - 20' on center for small trees (<20' mature crown diameter), 20' - 25' O.C. for medium trees (20' - 35' mature crown dia), 35' O.C. for large trees (>35' mature crown dia).

C3: Consider recommending the incorporation of 2' wide courtesy strips (measured from face of curb) for vehicular egress at parallel parking zones.

C4: Standard 2 -- In our experience 12-foot-tall vertical clearance is generally not possible at time of planting. Most trees planted in urban settings are shorter, for example 8' tall at time of planting. Consider clarifying this standard: does it refer to the height of the lowest branch? Consider recommending a rule of thumb regarding eventual pruning to achieve 7'-6" clearance.

C5: Standard 4 -- Please clarify if "landscaping" refers to plant material and not hardscape. If referring to plant material, please clarify how the use of permeable pavers affects design evaluation. Generally speaking, 50% of landscaped area for LID site design measures, etc., is a restrictive metric that does not account for diverse site conditions, for example: how much of the site is on grade, could cisterns be utilized, what are the infiltration conditions? If 50% of planting were to be utilized as stormwater control, that would require extensive use of water-

needy plants; the stormwater design capacity would most likely exceed the actual stormwater conditions of the site while requiring higher water use than would otherwise be necessary. Consider formulating recommendations for LID design and green stormwater infrastructure as Guidelines that are more adaptable to site particularities.

C6: Standards 5 & 6 -- Consider allowing lower-impact screening strategies, such at the use of plant material.

C7: Guideline 5 -- Consider using language such as "permeable or porous paving materials" instead of "permeable pavers" to suggest a wider range of strategies.

C8: Guideline 10 -- Clarify whether this is restricting natural turf and artificial grass, or if "turf" is being used to refer to plastic materials exclusively.

4.2.1 Privately-Owned (and Maintained) Public Open Space Design

Comment 1: Guideline 2 restricts design opportunities and limits adaptability of public open spaces. For a counter-example, Figure 4.13 on the same page appears to be a successful design that does not "visibly and physically distinguish between...through-traffic and destination spaces." Consider removing this recommendation.

On Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 10:57 AM Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov> wrote:

> Thank you so much Pedram and Sarah. We will review them and let you know if we have questions.
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Pedram Farashbandi <pedramfarashbandi@dbarchitect.com>
> **Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2020 4:11 PM
> **To:** Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
> **Cc:** Sarah Ahmadzai <sarahahmadzai@dbarchitect.com>
> **Subject:** DBA comments and question on "Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines"
>
> [External Email]
>
> Hi Leila,
>
> Thanks again for your presentation today and the opportunity to ask questions. You guys obviously put a lot of work into this and it's definitely going to be a great guideline for years to come.
> I'm attaching a memorandum from us summarizing our questions and comments.

Catalyze SV Public Comments on Citywide Design Standards & Guidelines

Alex Shoor <alex@CatalyzeSV.org>

Fri 7/31/2020 6:19 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Sam Liccardo <TheOfficeofMayorSamLiccardo@sanjoseca.gov>; Kline, Kelly <Kelly.Kline@sanjoseca.gov>; Devalcourt, Joel <Joel.Devalcourt@sanjoseca.gov>; Hughey, Rosalynn <Rosalynn.Hughey@sanjoseca.gov>; Walesh, Kim <Kim.Walesh@sanjoseca.gov>; Rood, Timothy <timothy.rood@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Michelle Huttenhoff <mhuttenhoff@spur.org>; Michael Lane <mlane@spur.org>; advocacy <advocacy@catalyzesv.org>; Project Specialist <projects@CatalyzeSV.org>

Dear Leila and San Jose's Planning staff,

Thank you for considering Catalyze SV's feedback on San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG). We applaud you and your colleagues' efforts on this important document that will help ensure high-quality developments that prioritized sustainable transportation and vibrancy.

Catalyze SV's members evaluate development projects, provide input to developers and city leaders on the projects, and advocate for the highest-quality projects to be approved and built quickly. We believe that getting these standards and guidelines right will benefit the communities in which we advocate and the projects on which we work. We would like to submit the attached feedback on the Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines. Would follow-up dialogue between Catalyze SV staff and City staff on these ideas be helpful to you? We would welcome it.

Catalyze SV looks forward to seeing the San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines approved with our feedback taken into consideration and seeing projects following these standards and guidelines come before our Project Advocacy Committee.

Sincerely,
Catalyze SV's staff and Project Advocacy Committee

Alex Shoor
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July 30, 2020

San Jose Planning Division
Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement (PBCE)
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines

Dear Leila Hakimizadeh and San Jose's Planning staff,

Thank you for considering our feedback on San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG). We applaud you and your colleagues' efforts on this important document.

Catalyze SV's members evaluate development projects, provide input to developers and city leaders on the projects, and advocate for the highest-quality projects to be approved and built quickly. We believe that getting these standards and guidelines right will benefit the communities in which we advocate and the projects on which we work. We would like to submit the following feedback on the Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines.

Positive Elements:

- **2.2.3 Block Size:** This guideline may be the most important in the whole document because it's the one San Jose has struggled with the most for decades. Limiting block size to 400 feet in residential and commercial areas (S4) is exceedingly important for sustainable transportation and creating pedestrian-scale streets. In general, blocks in San Jose are excessively long & not standardized, especially in areas such as North San Jose. Cities such as Sacramento, New York & DC have much more extensive grid patterns, which benefit these cities greatly in terms of navigating them, especially on foot. It is essential that the City sticks to this guideline and enforces it. The standard to align new streets, paseos, and open space with existing street patterns (S3) is important, and **we believe could be strengthened with standardized naming guidelines** (for instance, streets in alphabetical order, like in the Alphabet City area of NYC or DC). **In addition, can we ensure that publicly accessible private streets created to break up blocks are designed for low speeds which are safer for pedestrians? Also, we wonder how these guidelines would be implemented on blocks that are built-out by multiple developers?**

- **2.2.2 Relationship to Transit:** This a crucial point; we're grateful to staff for bringing it to the fore. Prioritizing the relationship with transit will help ensure new developments increase accessibility. We believe that the guidelines offer excellent direction on how development should orientate entrances, density, public space, & active frontages. The

standards on driveways and vehicle access (S2 & S3) are also very important components that we strongly agree with. We do believe the **standard for primary building entrances location could be strengthened (S1). We believe that when the project is located within a 5-minute walk (1,250 feet) of a Frequent Network transit stop, the primary entrance should be located closest to the transit stop** (instead of the 500 feet in the existing draft DSG).

- **3.3.5 Parking Garage Design:** The guidelines that at least 50% of the total parking structure façade length need to have active use (S1) will help improve the pedestrian environment, **although we believe this percent should be even higher.** The guidelines to design parking structures for possible future conversions to a different use (G6) are also extremely important, but we **believe this should be strengthened too**. **The guidelines (G6) should require parking structure floor heights to meet residential and commercial use requirements, and should only allow driveways within the parking decks to be slanted. This would ensure future conversions to residential or commercial uses will be easy and desirable.**

Elements to Improve:

- **3.1.3 Historic Adjacency:** While we appreciate the need to protect historic buildings and city landmarks, we believe these guidelines could go too far in limiting development in a few ways. In the applicability of this rule: structures that are adjacent or 50% of a building is within 200 feet from a San Jose Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) building, or eligible for HRI listing, need to follow the massing guidelines. The HRI includes over 4,000 buildings, & properties built in the timeframe that makes them eligible for HRI listing were built when San Jose was creating walkable neighborhoods. The applicability should not include buildings that are eligible for HRI listing which could include too many structures.

  Additionally, we are concerned with the standards that require massing to step down & reach the height of the adjacent HRI building (S1). Most of the buildings on the HRI are single-story residential buildings with substantial setbacks or driveways. Because this rule would require neighboring developments to start at this single-story height, it would likely ensure that small scale multi-family buildings would be impractical in most locations adjacent or within 200 feet of these HRI properties. This limit on development would be multiplied throughout the city if the eligible for HRI listing standard was also kept in place. To solve the housing crisis, we need to develop a better balance between preserving history & building new development. While reviewing developments Catalyze SV members consider the history of a site, but they also equally weight the need to allow new dense developments that can provide housing.

- **3.1.1 Massing Relationship to Context:** While we understand the intention of creating massing that is related to the context, we wonder if this requirement on street frontages is too strict (S2)? For example, the required maximum allowed height before setback would

not allow for the existing Vintage Towers Apartments at 235 E. Santa Clara to be built under these standards. We believe that the standard could look to change the calculation for the maximum allowed height before setback plane begins (S2) to allow for more urban feeling streets in areas covered by the DSG.

- **2.3.1 Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Location** - While we believe that these important guidelines around access are robust, we believe that they could be strengthened further by ensuring entrances on all streets. Could the standard be updated to ensure all developments have entrances on each street, paseos, or adjacent open space where it has frontage? There might need to be exceptions at corners or small developments, and please disregard if the existing standard already achieves this desired approach. This would improve the efficiency of walking as a transportation mode for residents & ensure eyes on all streets around developments which would increase safety.

The San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines will help ensure high-quality developments that prioritized sustainable transportation and vibrancy. We applaud the effort in developing the (DSG) and look forward to their approval with our feedback taken into consideration. We welcome follow-up dialogue with City staff on these ideas if that would be helpful, & look forward to seeing projects following these standards and guidelines come before our Project Advocacy Committee.

Sincerely,
Catalyze SV's staff and Project Advocacy Committee

CC: Mayor Sam Liccardo (mayoremail@sanjoseca.gov)
Kelly Kline (kelly.kline@sanjoseca.gov)
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About Catalyze SV
Catalyze SV's Project Advocacy Committee is comprised of community members who identify, evaluate, & lead advocacy efforts around specific development projects.

San Jose Design Guidelines - Comments from Westfield

Ziba Ghassemi <ziba.ghassemi@urw.com>

Thu 7/30/2020 8:36 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Daniel Hill <daniel.hill@urw.com>; Amirali Nasserian <amirali.nasserian@urw.com>; Trevor Pollard <trevor.pollard@urw.com>

[External Email]

Dear Leila,

My name is Ziba Ghassemi, Vice President of Design at Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield.

Speaking on behalf of the company, we think it's always a good time to talk about how we can improve the urban neighborhood through thoughtful design. As a property owner, Westfield constantly strives to bring vibrancy and world-class amenities to the communities it serves. The city is taking a step in the right direction by bringing forward a design standard and inviting public comments. It's apparent that a lot of work and thought have gone into this and we'd like to provide our feedback.

Below are some considerations:

2.0 Site

- P17 S1-S4 Maximum block size without public ROW doesn't seem to allow for land parcels for large development projects.
- P18 G3 Location of entrances for commercial and residential too prescriptive for large development projects. Should be revised to 'locate the primary building entrance for commercial uses at the building edge that faces a primary street, public open space, or parking lot/structure'.
- P24 G2 End to end visibility in paseos would preclude any curves, angles or topography changes to the planning of paseos.
- P26 S5 50% active uses on POPOS may be challenging for a residential development or when there's limited new retail.

3.0 Building

- P34 S2 Requiring 75-degree setback on mid-rise projects will be challenging in wood construction. The stepping back under other scenarios is also very restrictive.

4.0 Pedestrian Level

- P56 S6 Height requirement of 16' is excessive as a minimum. We suggest 14'.
- P48 & P71 Parking garages are required to have active uses (commercial and residential) on all sides although its contradicted by also asking for 50% active frontages. This would be a challenge for tight sites. Also, active uses requirement for parking garages should relate to its context & location as this may not be appropriate at all cases.

5.0 Specific Development Types

We would like to know:

- As a Significant Project Proposal, will there still be a process to approve a project that still allows deviations from the Citywide Design Guidelines in the interest of creating an Urban Village?

The nature of the Urban Village or Significant Project is that it increases density, commercial activity and job creation in specific areas. It would still follow the Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines but exceed the underlining zoning and density.

Warm regards,
Ziba

Ziba Ghassemi. AIA, LEED AP
Vice President of Design

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Part of the Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield Group – urw.com

RE: Invitation to a Designers and Developers Focus Group Meeting on July 24 for Citywide Design Guidelines and Standards

Ray Hashimoto <rhashimoto@HMHca.com>

Thu 7/30/2020 11:20 AM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>; Rood, Timothy <timothy.rood@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Olya Krasnykh <OKrasnykh@srgnc.com>; JYee@VTBS.com <JYee@VTBS.com>; Deena Morsilli <dmorsilli@hmhca.com>; Madeline Pritchard <mpritchard@hmhca.com>; Manford, Robert <Robert.Manford@sanjoseca.gov>; Bill Sowa <bsowa@HMHca.com>; Brian Glick <bglick@HMHca.com>

3 attachments (51 KB)

CSJ Design Std Guidelines Comments 20200730 MP.xlsx; CSJ Design Std Guidelines Comments 20200730 rth.xlsx; CSJ Design Std Guidelines Comments 20200730 DM.xlsx;

[External Email]

Leila and Tim:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the design standards/guidelines. I personally worked on the CSJ Industrial Design Guidelines back in the early 1990's I know how tough the assignment is. That's why it has take this many years to look at an overhaul. The three spreadsheets represents comments from the Planning Group at HMH, Deena Morsilli, Maddie Pritchard and myself. We may have additional comments coming from our Landscape Division to be sent out under separate cover.

A lot of good work here, but we are concerned about the whole notion of a Standards that findings to need to be made to vary from. We also think that given urban infill sites that vary in size and configuration that some of these standards and guidelines will be difficult to adhere to. How do these standards and guidelines apply to a rehabilitation or renovation of existing project sites that may have the monetary ability to meet the standards and guidelines? We are concerned that some updates and upgrades of older structures and centers may not get done because conforming to the new standards and guidelines may not be achievable. How can the requirements be metered in those situations?

Thanks again, Ray

Ray Hashimoto, AICP
Principal, Land Development Manager

408.487.2200 x5642 | rhashimoto@hmhca.com
1570 Oakland Road | San Jose | CA | 95131
www.hmhca.com
www.hmhlastudio.com

From: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Sent: Sunday, July 19, 2020 8:51 PM
To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: Invitation to a Designers and Developers Focus Group Meeting on July 24 for Citywide Design Guidelines and Standards

CSJ CJS Design Standards-Guidelines Comments/questions July 30, 2020

Doc Sectior	Pag	Item #	Edit, Comment or Question	Commento	Other Notes
CSJ Design Guidelines			CSJ		
2.1.1	14	G1	"near" a village or specific plan - what qualifies as near	Deena Morsilli, HMH Engineers	
2.2.3	17	S1 & S2	what about locations where these standards don't match existing neighborhood pattern		
2.3.1	18	S6	need more clarification - units would be required to have two entrances?		
2.3.2	19	S2	requiring driveways to be within 25' of a side property line seems too restrictive		
2.3.2	19	S3	what about buildings that require more than one point of access		
2.3.2	19	S4	requiring driveways to be within 25' of side or rear property lines seems too restrictive		
2.3.2	19	S14	60' of stacking seems excessive		
2.3.3	20	S5	Should be a guideline, not a standard. Not always possible		
2.4.1	22	S1-S4	This section is confusing and seems restrictive		
2.4.2	23	S2	how does this work with ground floor residential		
2.4.3	24	S1	how does this work with secure campus type developments?		
2.4.3	24	S3	why set a maximum width for paseos? Would want more than 40' between buildings that are more than 8 stories tall		
2.4.4	26	S3	all building need to have access to the comunal open space?		
2.4.5	27	general	what if a development desires to provide bicycle parking in each unit?		
2.4.5	27	s6	50% covered bicycle parking seems unnecessary		
2.4.6`	28	S3	seems difficult to achieve, particularly where you need stormwater treatment		
2.4.6	28	G6	is this compatible with 75% screening requirement?		
2.4.8	30	S4	unneccessarily restrictive. Site may not need 50% of landscaped areas for LID treatment.		
3.1.2	36	S2	Can these elements project into the right of way in a 0' setback condition?j		
3.1.3	37	G1	16' clearance just for commercial?		
3.2.1	38	S3	requiring split pad foundations?		
3.2.2	40	S3	50' driveway seems excessive and infeasible		
3.3.2	44	S3	flat roofs more difficult to collect stormwater runoff		
3.3.2	44	S4	could be infeasible		
3.3.5	48	S1	lining 50% of the parking structure façade with active uses reduces optimum layout of parking garages		
3.3.5	48	S6	seems finacially infeasible. Green roofs don't survive well in this area due to lack of rainfall		

CSJ Design Standards-Guidelines Review Draft - July 30, 2020						
Document	**Section**	**Page #**	**Item #**	**Edit, Comment or Question**	**Commentor**	**Other Notes**
CSJ Design Guidelines						
CSJ Design Guidelines	2.4.8	30	S1	this specific size seems quite large to be considered the standard unless solely a requirement for parking lots.	Maddie Pritchard, HMH Engineers	
	2.4.8	30	S5	is this a specific standard or a guideline on a per project basis?	HMH Engineers	
	2.1.1	14	S1	what are the classifications for small, medium, large sites?	HMH Engineers	
	2.4.2	23	S3	what if the building is residential including the ground floor?	HMH Engineers	
	2.4.4	26	S5	what if the ground floor is residential?	HMH Engineers	
	3.3.9	53	S1	can a building not have signage on any side besides the street frontage?	HMH Engineers	

CSJ Design Standards-Guidelines Review Draft - July 30, 2020						
Document	**Section**	**Page #**	**Item #**	**Edit, Comment or Question**	**Commenter**	**Other Notes**
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	Introduction	7	1.3.2	A couple of general comments: Has there been a check of this document's potential conflicts with the Complete Streets Sections. What about conflicts with existing Urban Village Plans?	Ray Hashimoto, HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	Introduction	8	1.1.2	What is the actual process of getting the Director of Planning to grant an "Exceptions" to Standards. What happens with Guidelines? Will the findings appear in the development permit?	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	2.0 Site	19	2.3.2 S1	Driveway 50 foot separation from ped entrances will be difficult to accomplish with narrow or smaller lots	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	2.0 Site	19	2.3.2 S12	Drive thru use will have a difficult time providing adequate queuing with this requirement, particularly with corner lots	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	2.0 Site	19	2.3.2 S14	Requiring garage access gates to be 60 feet back from driveway curb will be difficult to provide on infill sites and creates an area that is unsecured and potentially a attractive nuisance	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	2.3 Services and Utilities	20	2.3.3 S1	The requirement to locate all service type facilities at the side and rear of the site is not realistic. These service facilities are many times dependent on the location of infrastructure like water and power. This should be a Guideline not a Standard.	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	2.4 Site Organization	28	2.4.8 S1	Place first parking stall at lest 50 feet from entry drive… Complying with standard will be challenging to say the least, particularly on smaller sites or on retrofit sites. Should also be a Guideline not Standard. 25 to 30 feet is more realistic	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	2.4 Site Organization	30	2.4.8 S4	Utilize 50% of Landscape Area for LID Treatment. This Standard does not allow for a wide variety of landscape, in particularly trees. Generally speaking 4-5% of the site area is needed for storm water treatment. Don't mandate more than is necessary.	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	3.2 Access and Entry	40	3.2.2 S3	Provide 50 foot long driveway to parking garages. This Standard will be difficult to comply with on urban sites where land area is a premium and area in the garage needs to be use for other uses like building infrastructure, trash, bike parking, storage and the like.	HMH Engineers	
CSJ Design Std./Guidelines	5.2 Commercial	85	5.2.12	The queuing shown in the corner drive thru example does not seem realistic or practical. There room for only 3 vehicles on a ingress only driveway. There will be the need to queue more than 3 vehicles. Allowing a visually screened driveway along the street has to be an alternative.	HMH Engineers	
Definitions Section				The term public realm is defined as : Area outside building accessible or visible to public including streets and open space. The Department of Public works defines public realm as:) Privately Owned Public Open Spaces and 2)public easements (street right of way, sidewalk easement). Has there been some thought to aligning the definitions so that the Planning and DPW are the same.	HMH Engineers	

Objection and Request Amendment to Correct Draft SJ Citywide Standards and Guidelines

Garnetta Annable <garnetta_annable@hotmail.com>

Thu 7/30/2020 4:20 PM

To: The Office of Mayor Sam Liccardo <TheOfficeofMayorSamLiccardo@sanjoseca.gov>; Hughey, Rosalynn <Rosalynn.Hughey@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 1 <PlanningCom1@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 2 <PlanningCom2@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 3 <PlanningCom3@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 4 <PlanningCom4@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 5 <PlanningCom5@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 6 <PlanningCom6@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 7 <PlanningCom7@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; Peter Clarke <pjbclarke@hotmail.com>

3 attachments (3 MB)

20.0728 SJ Comm Design Guidelines 1990 Pg 5 Site Character 1.B.5.jpg; 20.0728 SJ Comm Design Guidelines 1990 Pg 6 Site Character 1.C.6.jpg; 20.0728 SJ Comm Design Guidelines 1990 Pg 7 Site Character 1.C.7.jpg;

[External Email]

Sam Licarrdo
Mayor
Email: mayoremail@sanjoseca.gov

July 29, 2020

Rosalynn Hughey
Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement
Email: rosalynn.hughey@sanjoseca.gov

City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA, 95113

Re: 1) Request Amendment of Draft San Jose Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines Update to include Existing Interface Guidelines and Diagrams not included in the Draft;

2) Request Amendment and Further Review by Planning Commission Before Transmittal to City Council

Mayor Licarrdo and Director Hughey:

Confirming verbal comments at the July 21 virtual meeting of the Draft Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines, because the Draft fails to incorporate specific existing Commercial Guidelines that are most important to single family property owners adjacent to future proposed high density developments -- we object to the Draft document proceeding to City Council as is.

Although the presentation purports--no changes to the existing Guidelines--the attached current specific paragraphs and diagrams are missing from the Draft. In particular, at a minimum, the following paragraphs need to be included in the updated Guidelines so that the public is assured their rights and interests are considered and will be addressed in the review and construction of future high density projects.

Site Character - Settings Paragraph B.5 Diagram 1.B.5 which states:

"5. Development of sloped properties should generally follow the natural contours of the land. Terraced parking lots, stepped building pads, and larger setbacks should be used to preserve the general shape of natural land forms and to minimize grade differentials which adjacent streets and with adjoining properties, especially when adjacent downhill properties are residential." Diagram 1.B.5 illustrating this guideline is set forth in the attachment.

Site Character - Interfaces Paragraph C.3 which states:

"3. Adjacent residential and non-residential uses should be as segregated as is necessary to maintain a livable residential environment by employment of masonry walls, landscaping, berms, building orientation and activity limitations."

Site Character - Interfaces Paragraph C.6 Diagram 1.C.6 which states:

"6. To protect residential privacy and to reduce visual mass, the maximum height of commercial buildings adjacent to single-family (attached and detached) residential properties should be 1 ½ feet of setback for each 1 foot of building height except that one-story commercial buildings may be placed at the setback applicable to the adjacent residential development. In addition, the setbacks of commercial buildings adjacent to higher density residential may be similar to the residential setback if the building scales are similar." Diagram 1.C.6 is attached. This Diagram is referred to multiple other sections of the existing guidelines.

Site Character - Interfaces Paragraph C.7 Diagram 1.C.7 which states:

"7. Window orientation and materials in non-residential buildings should preclude a direct line of sight into adjacent residential private open spaces within 100 feet." Diagram 1.C.7 is attached.

Our goal is to provide an accurate and compete document for the community as well as developers. If we missed the attached important guidelines in our review of the Draft, please contact the undersigned at the telephone numbers provided and direct us to the where in the Draft these important guidelines are included.

Pending clear inclusion of the existing guidelines in the consolidated document, we request the draft be amended to include these guidelines and diagrams before it proceeds for final approvals.

Respectfully submitted,

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cc Leila Hakimizadeh, AICP, LEED AP BD
Planner IV - Supervising Urban Designer/Planner
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
leila.hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov

2.4.3 Paseos Placement and Design

DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY, SUPPORT CONNECTIVITY, AND IMPLEMENT ACTIVE DESIGN

Create pedestrian and bicycle connections and paseos through medium and large sites to increase travel options and improve the circulation network.

Rationale

Paseos provide comfortable shortcuts for pedestrians and bicyclists and increase accessibility to different parts of neighborhoods.

Paseos are *landscaped* pedestrian and bicycle *connections* through large *blocks* that are separated from vehicular traffic and parking areas to offer people relief from the auto-oriented sites and provide enjoyable outdoor space and an alternative to walking on the street.

Standards

S1. Provide publicly-accessible *paseos* to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to and through sites on *blocks* that are over three acres in size or are more than 400 feet long on the longest side *(see Subsection 2.2.3 Block Size).*

S2. Align *paseos* with streets, transit stops, other *paseos*, bicycle paths, and walkways in *public open spaces* to facilitate circulation and multimodal connectivity across multiple *blocks.*

S3. *Paseos* must be at least:

- 12 feet wide when between a building and the side or rear property line of an adjacent development, measuring from the primary building *façade* to the property line *(see Fig. 2.18).*
- 16 feet wide when between two buildings that are each up to eight stories tall, measuring from the primary building *façades (see Fig. 2.19).*
- One-fourth of the sum of the heights of building *façades* that frame the *paseo* if either *façade* is taller than eight stories. The maximum width of such a *paseo* is 40 feet, and the minimum width is 20 feet, measured from the primary building *façades (see Fig. 2.20).*
- One-fourth of the sum of the heights of building *façades* that frame the *paseo* if either *façade* is equal to or taller than 10 stories. The maximum width of such a *paseo* is 60 feet, measured from the primary building *façades (see Fig. 2.20).*

S4. *Paseos* must have a minimum eight-foot-wide travel path with *landscaping* on either side.

S5. Locate buildings along at least 80 percent of total parcel *frontages* facing a *paseo* and *articulate* building *façades* along the entire length of *paseos (see Fig. 2.23).*

S6. Where covered *paseos* are provided, they must have at least 20 feet of clearance from floor to ceiling. For buildings taller than six stories, the height of a covered *paseo* must be 35 feet or more.

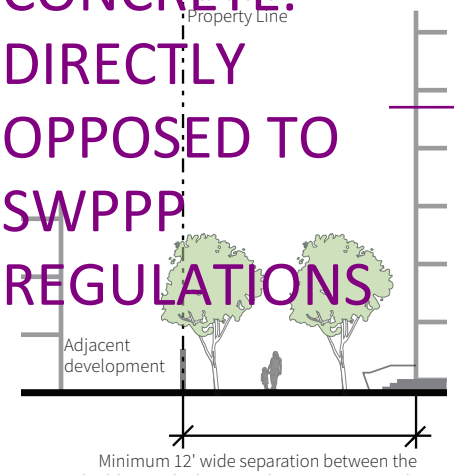
S7. If the *paseo* is intended for public use, a public access easement (PAE) must be dedicated to the City.

Guidelines

G1. *Paseos* may have built space above or below them, so long as they are open to public during building operations, appear clearly open to the public, and are visually safe with lighting levels at least equivalent to adjacent *public open spaces* or streets.

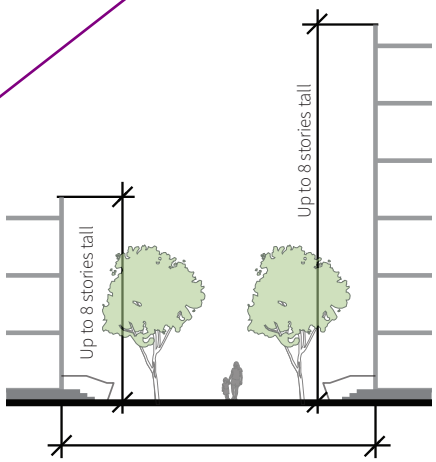
G2. Maintain end-to-end visibility and access for all *paseos* and provide *active frontages* that create *eyes-on-the-street (see Fig. 2.21).*

EXCESSIVE CONCRETE. DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO SWPPP REGULATIONS



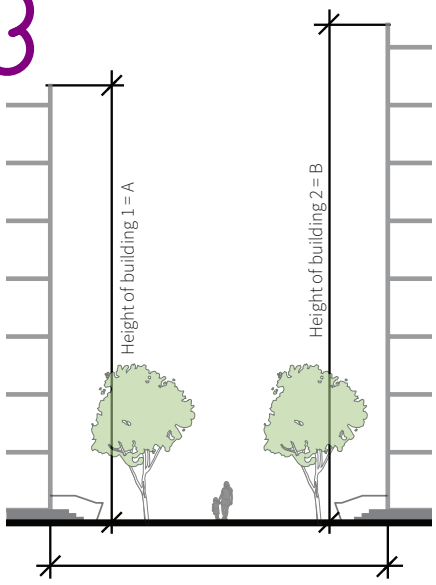
Minimum 12' wide separation between the building and adjacent side or rear property line

Fig. 2.18 Maintain the minimum width for *paseos* between a building and adjoining property line.



Minimum 16' wide separation between adjacent buildings

Fig. 2.19 Maintain the minimum width for *paseos* between two buildings, each of which is up to eight stories tall.



Width = (A+B)/4
Maximum 40' for buildings taller than or equal to 8 stories;
Maximum 60' for buildings taller than or equal to 10 stories

Fig. 2.20 Calculate the minimum width of *paseos* when one of the adjoining buildings is taller than eight stories.

2.4.8 Landscaping and Stormwater Management

DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPLEMENT ACTIVE DESIGN

Create welcoming places and enhance the quality of the environment with sustainable landscaping areas.

Rationale

Landscaping softens open spaces and buildings to create welcoming places and reinforces site organization, circulations paths, and open spaces. *Green stormwater infrastructure* and *Low Impact Development (LID)* techniques can be used for *landscaping* since they can create unique features, manage stormwater, and enhance environmental quality and character of developments.

Standards

S1. Place trees in at least 10-foot-long and four-foot-wide planting areas at a minimum distance of 7.5 feet from the building to allow for canopy to grow based on the species.

S2. Provide minimum 12-foot-tall vertical clearance for tree canopies in and around service and loading areas.

S3. Where private, service, and utility functions such as bedrooms, parking garages, and utility areas are located at the building's ground floor *frontage*, provide a minimum three-foot wide buffer with vegetation or *landscaped semi-private open spaces* for at least at least 25 percent of the street *frontage. (see Fig. 2.37).*

S4. Utilize at least 50 percent of the total *landscaped* area on a development site for *LID* site design measures, source controls, and *green stormwater infrastructure*, including but not limited to bioretention, rain gardens, *LID* planters, and permeable pavers.

Additional Guidelines for General Plan Commercial and Industrial Land Use Designations

S5. Provide at least five-foot-wide *landscape* buffer at the side and front property lines and five-foot-tall solid walls at the shared property lines where Commercial or Mixed-Use *General Plan* land use designations abut Residential *General Plan* land use designations.

Fig. 2.37 Enhance public spaces, reinforce site organization, and improve environmental quality by using *LID* for *landscaping.*

IF THE BUILDNG HAS TO HAVE 5' MIN SETBACKS HOW CAN YOU ADD THESE TREE WELLS

S6. Provide a landscape buffer of at least 10 feet at the side and front property lines and five- to seven-foot-tall solid walls at the shared property lines where Industrial *General Plan* land use designations are adjacent to Residential *General Plan* land use designations *(see Fig. 2.37).*

Guidelines

G1. Ensure both street trees and on-site trees complement the design and scale of area master plans, project sites, and adjacent architecture to maximize the visual impact on the *public realm*.

G2. Use *landscaping* to define on-site circulation and highlight focal points, building entrances, and open spaces, such as *POPOS* and *semi-private open spaces*. For example, tree-lined walkways and special paving materials can shape entrances, plazas, and activity areas.

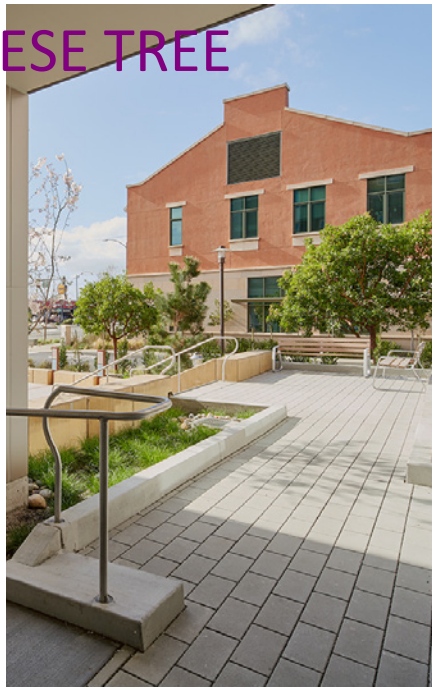


Fig. 2.38 *Communal open spaces* with outdoor furniture and direct connections from inside the building.

3.3.3 Decks and Balconies

ANALYZE CONTEXT, PROVIDE QUALITY DESIGN, AND DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

THIS GOES AGAINST 5' SETBACKS. 10'-5'=5' NOT THE 4' YOU CALL OUT HERE

Create active façades using decks and balconies that add detail and visual interest to buildings.

Rationale

Decks and balconies provide *private open spaces* and *areas of relief* in residential and mixed-use buildings.

They are important elements of *façade* design, giving buildings a residential character and providing *articulation* and detailing on building *façades*.

Standards

S1. Private decks and balconies must extend less than 10 feet out from building *façade*s. When they extend into public rights-of-way the projection must be less than four feet outside the property line.

S2. *Occupied decks* and *balconies* must be at least six feet wide and four feet deep to encourage outdoor seating and use *(see Fig. 3.36).*

S3. Juliet balconies are *unoccupied spaces,* and *façade* elements that must be a minimum of three feet wide and 12 inches deep to provide relief or *articulation* in the *façade (see Fig. 3.36).*

S4. Maintain a minimum 16-foot clearance above the *public realm* when any decks or balconies are projecting into public rights-of-way.

S5. Provide balconies for at least 25 percent of residential units facing *secondary streets* and *public open spaces*.

Guidelines

G1. Include decks and balconies to provide *private open spaces* and add visual interest to residential and commercial buildings *(see Fig. 3.34 and 3.35).*

G2. Design parapets and railings for decks and balconies using materials that are similar to or consistent with the overall design and materials used in the development.

G3. Create a *rhythm* or constant repetition of balconies and decks to *articulate* building *façades (see Fig. 3.36).*

Fig. 3.34 Balconies projecting from the building mass.

Fig. 3.35 Recessed balconies carved out of the building mass.

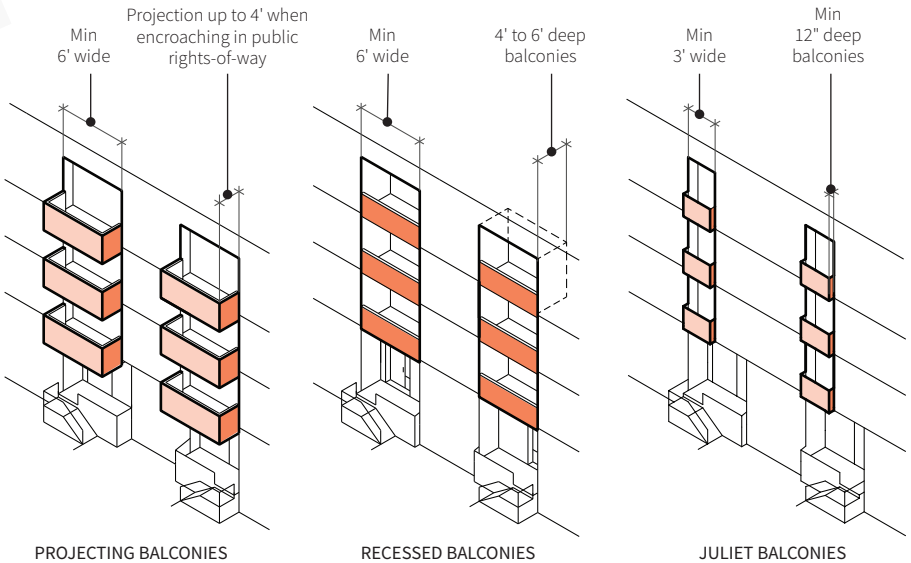


Fig. 3.36 Create a *rhythm* of balconies and decks for interesting *façade articulation* and *private open spaces* for tenants.

Related Subsections

3.1.2 Form, Proportion, and Scale
3.3.1 Façade Design and Articulation
4.2.2 Communal and Private Open Space Design

General Plan Reference

CD-2, LU-9, LU-11, VN-5

Outdoor Lighting for San Jose Citywide

Mark Baker <mbaker@softlights.org>

Mon 8/10/2020 2:23 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Dear Ms. Hakimizadeh,

Soft Lights (www.softlights.org) is an advocacy organization dedicated to educating decision makers about the dangers of light pollution and LED lights. We would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Citywide Design Guidelines.

First, thank you for all your efforts in putting together a plan to keep and make San Jose a sustainable, beautiful and livable environment. Our comments will relate to lighting and light pollution.

1) The Citywide proposal did not specify a maximum color temperature for outdoor lights. We have found that 2700 Kelvin is the maximum tolerable color temperature for those who have Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS). Even 3000K can cause emotional disturbances ranging from mild annoyance to migraine headaches and nausea.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against those with light sensitivity disabilities. Therefore, the Citywide proposal should specify 2700K as the maximum color temperature to ensure that outdoor lighting does not discriminate against the approximately 20% of the population that has light sensitivity.

2) The Citywide proposal does not make mention of the million billion stars above us. Therefore, we ask that the Citywide proposal be updated to focus efforts on ensuring that residents can view the Milky Way at night. This means eliminating light pollution, which can be done by setting a standard BUG rating of B0, U0 and G0 for Backlight, Uplight and Glare, and by requiring that outdoor lighting be severely dimmed or turned off from 11pm to 6am.

3) We know that circadian rhythms are negatively impacted by light pollution. A recent study showed the light pollution is increasing the chances of our children developing bipolar disorder. Therefore, we ask that the Citywide proposal address the issue of Artificial Light at Night and propose design guidelines that protect our Darkness resource that is a fundamental need of all biological systems.

4) The San Jose City Council is currently contemplating adding LED billboard light pollution into the city. This effort is contrary to the Citywide Design Guidelines. LED billboards are a distraction danger and cause mental anguish for people with SPS. We encourage you to advise the council against installing any LED billboards.

5) LED flashing/strobing lights are rapidly being deployed on buildings, vehicles and other objects. These lights are incompatible with human biology and are making our lives miserable. The Citywide

proposal is an excellent place to specify that LED flashing/strobing lights must be prohibited.

Thank you for allowing us this chance to provide input.

Sincerely,

Mark Baker, B.S.E.E.
Soft Lights
www.softlights.org

City wide design guidelines

Shani Kleinhaus <shanibirds@gmail.com>

Mon 8/3/2020 11:44 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Hi Leila,
I did not have time to review the guidelines. I sent you comments on bird safe design before (see below)
and I think it would be good to mandate 80% of the plantings should be California natives, and each project should have at least one Valley Oak or Coast Live Oak

and I have a general concern - does the plan treat areas that are adjacent to open space the same way as areas that are not adjacent to open space? is it the same for flat and hilly areas? I think areas in the hills and next to open space may require special attention.

Thank you,
Shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
22221 McClellan Rd.
Cupertino, CA 95014
650-868-2114
advocate@scvas.org

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Shani Kleinhaus** <shanibirds@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 26, 2020 at 2:19 PM
Subject: Bird Safe Design section
To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>

Hello Leila, Thank you for sharing the draft with me, I hope you are doing well,

The new building code Title 24-2019 does not allow more than 50% glass on building facades for most buildings, so I think we need to do better than that for the birds...

Comment 1: S3 - is unclear, can you separate into sections?
I tried to add an important standard (see S3-1 below) and break the rest into 2 sections (S3-2 and S3-3) but not sure I understand the distinction. I added a few words to try and make sense of this.

S3-1 Use bird safety treatment on all ornamental glass protrusions from buildings where the sky or foliage are reflected or can be seen through the glass.
S3-2 Use bird safety treatment on all areas of glass through which the sky or foliage are visible on the other side of parallel panes of glass less than 30-ft apart.
S3-3 Use bird safety treatment for any building facades that are glazed for more than 50% of the facade area and are parallel to each other and less than 30 feet apart

Comment 2: For projects in the riparian corridor - can you distinguish commercial buildings from residential developments? So:

S2 For projects within 300-ft of riparian corridor:
S1 - apply bird safety treatment to 90% of each facade of non-residential development or to a non-residential part of a mixed use development
S2 - For residential buildings and residential parts of mixed use buildings, apply bird safety treatment when facades have 50% or more glazed surface

Comment 3: Please add a Standard: Do not plant landscaping tree lines that are perpendicular to glass facades
and also
I wonder if there is a way to improve creating other situations where birds fly into an area where they are funneled into a glass facade or a skyway. The J Paul city place building is like that. They have some mitigation, and it should always be required with these situations, especially if there is vegetation in the indented areas.

These situations (trees or structures the lead birds to their demise) are actually so much worse than non-reflective sheer glass walls.

By the way, I could not search the entire document
Feel free to call me, anytime

Shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
22221 McClellan Rd.
Cupertino, CA 95014
650-868-2114
advocate@scvas.org

Re: City wide design guidelines

Shani Kleinhaus <shanibirds@gmail.com>

Wed 8/5/2020 12:07 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

I appreciate this Leila
I think the City arborist may push back about the oaks, but still - it can really help in re-wilding the city

I'll try and look for resources about areas in the hills or near open space

Shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
22221 McClellan Rd.
Cupertino, CA 95014
650-868-2114
advocate@scvas.org

On Wed, Aug 5, 2020 at 11:53 AM Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov> wrote:

> Hi Shani,
>
> If you need more time to provide comments, I can extend it to **Aug 12**. The version you have is more aligned with Downtown Guidelines with a few changes. As a community member, you can provide comments till this project goes to City Council but the sooner I receive the comments, the more time I have to analyze your comments.
>
> and I think it would be good to mandate 80% of the plantings should be California natives, and each project should have at least one Valley Oak or Coast Live Oak.
>
> *We will check this with our city arborist*
>
> and I have a general concern - does the plan treat areas that are adjacent to open space the same way as areas that are not adjacent to open space? is it the same for flat and hilly areas? I

think areas in the hills and next to open space may require special attention.

We will take your comment into consideration. Please let us know if you have any specific guidelines about this matter that you like us to add.

Thank you,

Leila Hakimizadeh, AICP, LEED AP ND
Planner IV - Supervising Urban Designer/Planner
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
City of San Jose, 200 E Santa Clara Street, Tower, 3rd Floor
Phone: (669)244-2541 (Temporary VM during pandemic)
Email: leila.hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov

From: Shani Kleinhaus <shanibirds@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2020 11:44 PM
To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: City wide design guidelines

[External Email]

Hi Leila,
I did not have time to review the guidelines. I sent you comments on bird safe design before (see below)
and I think it would be good to mandate 80% of the plantings should be California natives, and each project should have at least one Valley Oak or Coast Live Oak

and I have a general concern - does the plan treat areas that are adjacent to open space the same way as areas that are not adjacent to open space? is it the same for flat and hilly areas? I think areas in the hills and next to open space may require special attention.

Thank you,
Shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
22221 McClellan Rd.
Cupertino, CA 95014
650-868-2114
advocate@scvas.org

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Shani Kleinhaus** <shanibirds@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 26, 2020 at 2:19 PM
Subject: Bird Safe Design section
To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>

Hello Leila, Thank you for sharing the draft with me, I hope you are doing well,

The new building code Title 24-2019 does not allow more than 50% glass on building facades for most buildings, so I think we need to do better than that for the birds...

Comment 1: S3 - is unclear, can you separate into sections?
I tried to add an important standard (see S3-1 below) and break the rest into 2 sections (S3-2 and S3-3) but not sure I understand the distinction. I added a few words to try and make sense of this.

S3-1 Use bird safety treatment on all ornamental glass protrusions from buildings where the sky or foliage are reflected or can be seen through the glass.
S3-2 Use bird safety treatment on all areas of glass through which the sky or foliage are visible on the other side of parallel panes of glass less than 30-ft apart.
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These situations (trees or structures the lead birds to their demise) are actually so much worse than non-reflective sheer glass walls.

By the way, I could not search the entire document
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SIERRA CLUB
LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER

San Mateo, Santa Clara and San Benito Counties

July 30, 2020

Leila Hakimizadeh, AICP, LEED AP ND
Planner IV - Supervising Urban Designer/Planner
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
City of San Jose, 200 E Santa Clara Street, Tower, 3rd Floor

Re: San Jose Design Guidelines

Dear Leila,

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter is pleased to provide the following comments on the San Jose design guidelines. Thank you for inviting our input

We want to congratulate you on design guidelines that are very well-thought-out, well-organized and well presented for ease of use and are an aesthetic experience for the user.

The one major observation that we have is regarding the importance of trees in the urban context.

Currently, our public rights of way combined with surface parking add up to over 50% of the urban fabric. In the post-COVID era, the importance of pleasant outdoor spaces and of the increased use of trees in our outdoor spaces has gained new importance.

> Guiding Principle #1: Design for Sustainability_ Lead with sustainable building and site designs to support San José's resilience and resource stewardship - now and in the future

The sustainability value of a good urban canopy, now and in the future, cannot be overestimated. The very character of a City may be defined by its tree canopy.

Including increased tree canopy design guidelines combined with new mandatory green stormwater infrastructure requirements, as the backbone of an improved urban canopy, can be a powerful combination that should be encouraged, for sustainability, at every opportunity through the design guidelines .

A good urban canopy provides many benefits, not limited to the following:

- Reduces the urban heat island effect of hot pavement
- Reduces energy consumption of nearby buildings that receive shade
- Captures rainwater in its canopy and releases it slowly thereby reducing flooding
- Reduces load on storm drain infrastructure by absorbing rain water through tree roots
- Provides shade making walking a pleasant experience on streets and parking lots
- Encourages healthy behaviour of walking and biking on shaded streets and sidewalks thereby reducing VMT and GHG.
- Cleans the air and provides humidity, reducing the incidence of asthma, a major health hazard of City life
- Builds biodiversity in a healthy ecology, sustaining birds, pollinators, beneficial creatures and insects and improved soils.

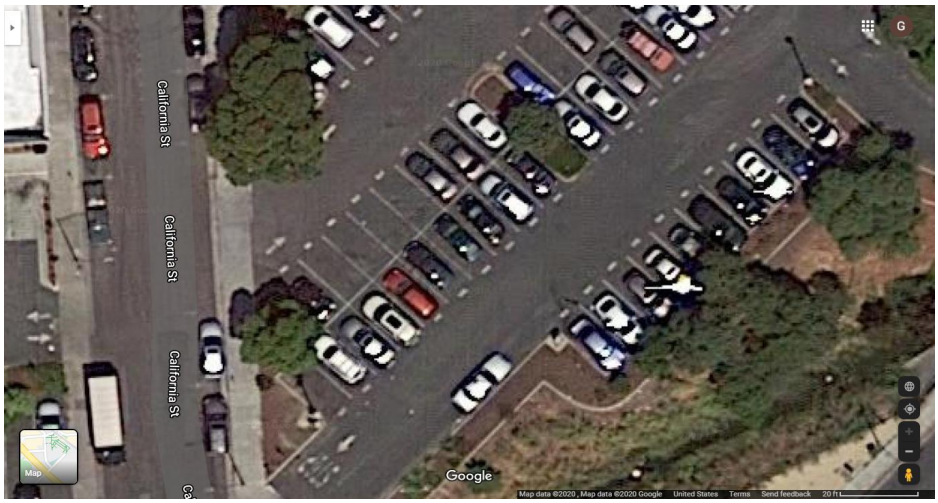
3921 East Bayshore Road, Suite 204, Palo Alto, CA 94303 650-390-8411 *www.sierraclub.org/loma-prieta*

A lot of the diagrams in the guidelines show parking lots that appear to be designed before sustainability, including climate change, was a major issue. In the newly imagined city, for a healthy urban forest, these guidelines can make a big difference by emphasizing tree cover.

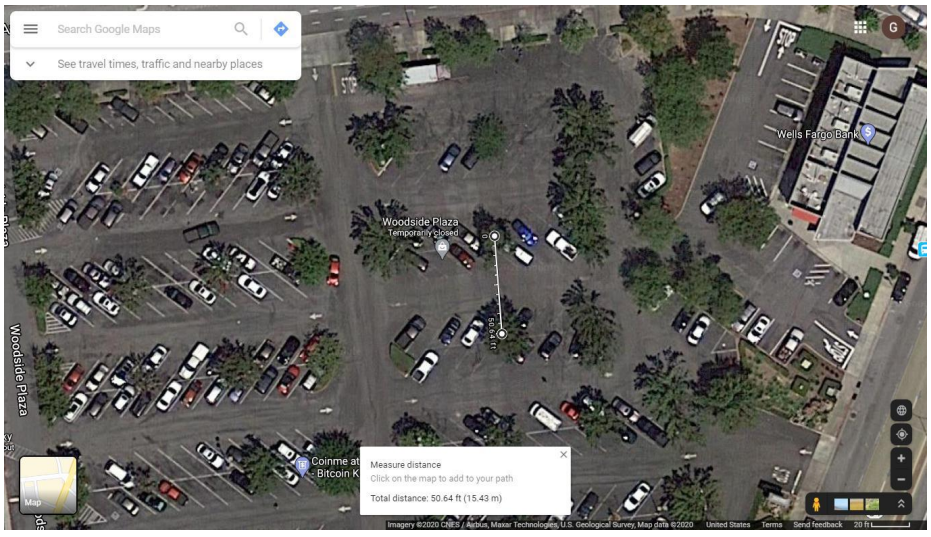
As an example, we notice that the recommendation for maximum tree spacing is 10 cars spaces width . This, in our experience, is often used as a design standard rather than a maximum.

See attached Google photos of parking lots:

Typical urban heat island- Photo 1 shows a typical urban parking lot with **10 parking spaces between trees**.



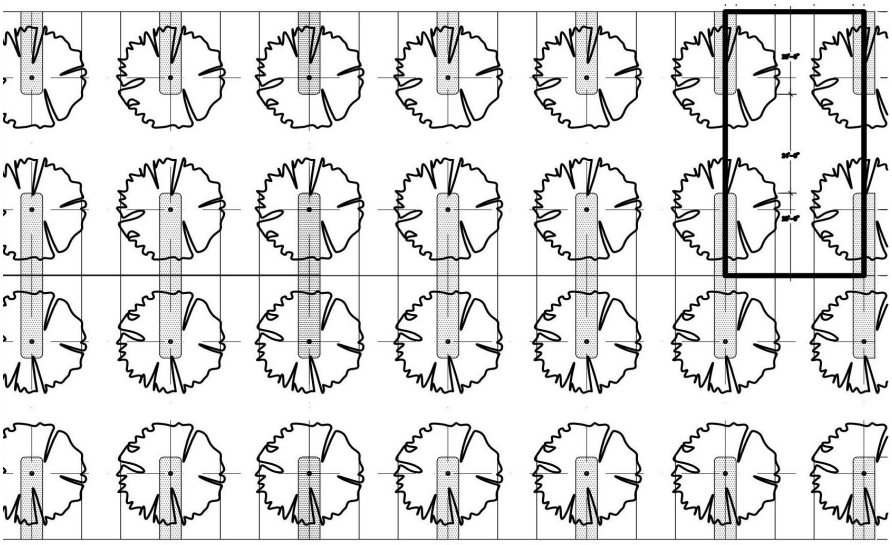
Urban heat island - Photo 2 shows a retail parking lot -Spacing is 50' apart with 50' wide aisles - with **50 year old** mature trees, mostly ornamental pear with mulberry trees (larger canopy) at ends of aisles. . There is not enough shade to cool the pavement.



In order to reduce the urban heat island effect, it is important to revise the guidelines to establish a minimum spacing of trees.that provides significant tree cover and shades hot parking lots and sidewalks. On the

increasing 90-100 degree hot days[1], asphalt parking lots get as high as 130-150 degrees Fahrenheit. This raises surrounding temperatures and is hot enough to burn the bare paws of dogs, including seeing-eye and assistance dogs. Medium rare steak is between 125-130 degrees.

Ideal tree spacing: Parking lot trees, in an urban context, are usually medium trees (Sec.2.4.6 S4), an ideal parking lot grid has trees at a grid of 32' x 32' feet apart which translates to a tree every three spaces with a planting well 5' wide.***See below.*** This provides shade for the asphalt and keeps the ground cool. All tree wells should be used as a bioswales for green stormwater infrastructure (G5) to filter out the parking lot pollutants of oil, and toxic brake dust and tire dust.



2. PARKING LOT WITH 32' X 32' GRID OF TREES
BIOSWALES AT TREE ISLANDS . 5' X 40' FOR DRAINAGE
PERMEABLE CONCRETE WOULD ALLOW ADDITIONAL DRAINAGE

Maximum tree spacing: As an absolute maximum spacing, we recommend a spacing of 32' (3 spaces) x the width of the parking aisle 40' - 65'**.** More than half the asphalt area will be unshaded. However, the shade will move during the day and it will not get as hot as the current maximum 100' spacing (10 car spaces) (Sec 2.4.6-S5) that has been the norm for parking lots for a long time now.

For the design guidelines we have the following recommendations:

> Insert wording: "In order to add to the urban tree canopy, trees in parking lots shall be spaced every 3 spaces, in a tree well which is 5' wide minimum. Tree wells shall be used as bioswales wherever possible. Trees shall be selected from the city's tree list, preferably native species, for habitat value and drought tolerance and be irrigated for the first 5 years"
>
> In the diagrams, show the Urban canopy: Since diagrams are very informative and people often examine the diagrams more than reading the text, it is important that the artist who does the diagrams indicate more trees in all the parking lots. Otherwise the graphics tell a different story, showing urban canopy as not being integral to the guidelines.
>
> Label tree wells as bioswales in the diagrams: The text mentions green infrastructure, (A2.4.6-G5) however, the diagrams indicate traditional tree wells of the style that have been prevalent for the last half century. It is critical for everyone looking at the guidelines to get the message both in the text as

[1] San Jose Merc. Jul 16, 2019 - Bay Area likely to see more 100+ degree days in coming ... San Jose will go from having 7 days a year on average above a heat index of 90 degrees between 1971 and 2000 to 24 days a year by mid-century and 53 days by late century, at the current rate of emissions.

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well as in the images. We highly recommend that the images be adjusted and the tree wells be LABELED as bioswales wherever trees are indicated.

Sections affected are:

1. Section 2.3.2. Driveways and vehicle drop off: At the diagram, please consider adding a label "Parking lots shaded to reduce urban heat island effect".

2. Section 2.4.4 Open Space Placement and Design: Rational- include verbiage on importance of pleasant shaded spaces. "Well-placed shaded open spaces can support quality connections, support active uses, provide transitions between various uses, and be a destination for recreation….

   At the diagram, please consider adding a label to upper parking lot: "Parking lot with trees to reduce urban heat island effect"

3. Section 2.4.6 Vehicular parking and Surface Parking : Include reducing heat island effect in Rational. Show MORE trees in parking lot to emphasize the importance of trees to reduce urban heat island effect for sustainability .

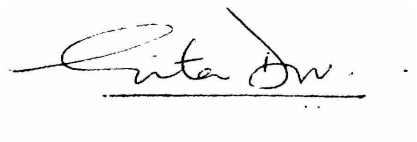
4. Section 2.4.8 Landscaping and Storm water management: Make green infrastructure mandatory and label bioswales in diagram

5. Section 5 Special Development Types: Please include some guidelines mentioning trees in these sections in order to get the Urban Canopy.

The guidelines are really good. However, the Guiding Principle of Sustainability could be strengthened as suggested. We look forward to trees and green infrastructure being incorporated more organically into the guidelines.

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Respectfully submitted,



Gita Dev, Co-Chair

Sustainable Land Use Committee

Sierra Club Loma Prieta

Cc James Eggers, Executive Director, SCLP

Gladwyn D'Souza, Conservation Committee, Co-Chair

Katja Irvin, Conservation Committee, Co-Chair

Re: Comments on Draft Design Guidelines

Terry Christensen <terry.christensen@sjsu.edu>

Thu 7/16/2020 12:27 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Davide Vieira <davide@vieiracorp.com>

[External Email]

Leila -- I conferred with Davide Vieira about this policy and he suggested the following language:

"Protect and enhance views of historic buildings. New developments within 200 feet of a historic building that is at least 50 feet tall must be at least 40% lower in height than the historic building."

We submit this on behalf of the BART Transit Village Advocates.

Thanks.

Terry Christensen

On Tue, Jul 14, 2020 at 10:13 PM Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov> wrote:

> Hi Terry,
>
> Thanks for your comments. Are you able to provide some replacement language for the 3.1.3?
>
> Leila Hakimizadeh, AICP, LEED AP ND
> Planner IV - Supervising Urban Designer/Planner
> Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
> City of San Jose, 200 E Santa Clara Street, Tower, 3rd Floor
> Phone: (669)244-2541 (Temporary VM during pandemic)
> Email: leila.hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Terry Christensen <terry.christensen@sjsu.edu>
> **Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 3:44 PM
> **To:** Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
> **Subject:** Comments on Draft Design Guidelines
>
> [External Email]

Leila,

for the record

3.1.3. Historic Adjacency (proximity to historic buildings) on Page 37.
G.4. Protect and enhance views of historic buildings.

- This seems good, but stating it more strongly would be better. We are especially concerned about the views of the Church of Five Wounds, which should continue to dominate and provide identity for Little Portugal and the coming BART station.

3.1.2 S3. Do not provide streetwalls that are more than 200 feet in length without a significant architectural break (recess or projection).

- 200 feet is WAY TOO LONG for an unbroken facade (see Whole Foods on The Alameda)

3.3.7. Materials and Color (this approaches some of the design specific in our village plans) on Page 51
G.6. Use of historically and culturally significant materials.

- This also seems good but maybe not enough --- should also reference specific cultural character of the neighborhoods where the project is located (Japantown, Little Portugal, Little Italy, Alum Rock/Mayfair, others?)

Terry
--
Terry Christensen
CommUniverCity/BART Transit Village Advocates
and
Professor Emeritus
San Jose State University

--
Terry Christensen
CommUniverCity
and
Professor Emeritus
San Jose State University

RE: Public Draft of Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines for review

Torney, Lola <Lola.Torney@vta.org>

Fri 7/24/2020 10:36 AM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: melissa cerezo <Melissa.Cerezo@vta.org>; plan.review <plan.review@vta.org>

[External Email]

Hi Leila,
Thanks again for sharing this document with VTA. We only had one comment below:

- Page 66 – Figure 5.4 caption does not match the image

The rest of the document looks great and we look forward to seeing some excellent projects that follow these guidelines in the future!

From: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2020 7:36 PM
To: plan.review <plan.review@vta.org>; Cerezo, Melissa <Melissa.Cerezo@vta.org>; Torney, Lola <Lola.Torney@vta.org>
Subject: Public Draft of Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines for review

Hi Lola and Melissa,

I hope this email finds you well.
See below for the **public Draft of Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines.**
https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=61219

Please provide your comments on the proposed draft by **July 24.** This is the last chance to provide comments before this project goes to Planning Commission Public Hearing.

This is the invitation I sent to Community members in case you want to attend (It might not be necessary for you):

Dear Community Member:

You are invited to two **Virtual Community Meetings** as stated below for **San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines Update:**

- **Tuesday, July 21**, Informational Session, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, July 28**, Listening Session, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Project Description: San José Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines" (Citywide DSG) has updated and consolidated residential, commercial, and industrial design guidelines as one document. The Citywide DSG will work in conjunction with other City documents and regulations to ensure that buildings throughout San José have high-quality design and are appropriate for their site, function, and neighborhood. Compliance with the Citywide DSG will be mandatory in the design review process for all applicable developments.

Trees and urban forest questions

Shani Kleinhaus <shanibirds@gmail.com>

Thu 8/13/2020 6:51 PM

To: Hakimizadeh, Leila <Leila.Hakimizadeh@sanjoseca.gov>

1 attachments (882 KB)

Sierra Club comment - San Jose Design Guidelines 7-30-20.pdf;

[External Email]

Hi Leila,
I think it is wonderful that you have identified the Health and Active Design principle.
But the standards and guidelines are strong on active, and thin on health - Health should address lighting, tree canopy, heat island impact (including glare), and benefits of Urban Ecology/ biological regeneration.

So here are a few questions regarding trees and vegetation:

1. Can the City require a percentage of the lot to be planted rather than built or hardscape - especially shrubs and trees?.
- If so - how much space is needed for a large tree to thrive? Is it feasible that new developments will have that space?

2. If a development is required to plant trees along the street, can the City require at least 1 oak tree/70 feet to support and regenerate the valley's historical ecology?

3. Can the City require % of plantings areas around the buildings, in courtyards and in roof to gardens to be locally native:
- 60%: Locally native grasses/groundcover
- 80% : Locally native shrubs (there are many lovely ones to choose from)
and 60% of all trees to be CA native trees, including at lease 1 Valley or Coast Live oak?

4. Can stormwater swales be designed to allow native trees (buckeye, willow, other smallish trees)
Here are some questions regarding trees

5. The Sierra Club recommends that parking lots should have a tree every 3 spaces, please see their letter attached.
- Can this be added to the standards: "In order to add to the urban tree canopy, trees in parking lots shall be spaced every 3 spaces, in a tree well which is 5' wide minimum. "
- And this to Guidelines: "Tree wells shall be used as bioswales wherever possible."

Thank you,
Shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.