

EL PASO DOWNTOWN + UPTOWN
MASTER PLAN APPENDIX

URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

The starting point for urban design in Downtown + Uptown is the pedestrian experience and improved active mobility infrastructure. Strong architecture and engaging public spaces shall enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment and enhance the surrounding area.



URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

A.1—Context and Connections

Detailed Site Development Plan Review Applications shall be responsive to the existing built environment

including alignment with primary frontages, overall image, scale, character, and connections to adjacent sites and rights-of-way. Developments shall integrate with surrounding streets, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities and improve the connectivity in Downtown + Uptown by providing public access across sites where appropriate. Applications shall incorporate sidewalks, paths, bicycle facilities, streetcar, and transit connections in accordance with adopted plans.

CONTEXT AREA AND CONNECTIONS MAP

- A. Applications shall provide a context map beyond the site boundaries in all directions a minimum of 100 feet
- B. This map shall identify existing and proposed building footprints, parcel lines, street names, locations of transit stops, streetcar services, street trees, bike lanes, parks/open space, water bodies, schools, community facilities, and commercial/retail areas, as identified within the requested distance.
- C. This map shall also identify landmark features, district boundaries, buildings on the historic register, building towers, parking lots, and public open spaces.
- D. This map shall identify sidewalks, paths, trails, open spaces, streetcar and transit stops, and bicycle facilities. If any of these infrastructure elements are missing, the map shall also identify gaps.

SITE SURVEY

- E. A site survey prepared by a Texas registered surveyor that includes 2' contour intervals, parcel lines, all on-site infrastructure (overhead and underground utilities), and all information within a 10' radius of the site including, sidewalk, trees, parking meters, bus stops, curb/gutter, and roadway striping.

RESPONDING TO THE CONTEXT

- F. Building design and orientation shall be consistent with the established streetscape standards.
- G. If necessary, the application shall include an explanation of how the proposed project compliments the surrounding uses, including historic resources and architecture.
- H. Existing trees shall be preserved to the extent possible. Trees may not be removed without prior City approval.

Context and connections map

Application location	Mobility	Public Realm
Development site	Brio	Urban Rooms
	Streetcar	Parks
	Bus Stop	
	Protected Bikeway	



Example of a context and connections map within a ¼ mile from the site's perimeter showing urban design features, transportation infrastructure, and connections. The minimum map scale is 1"=400'.

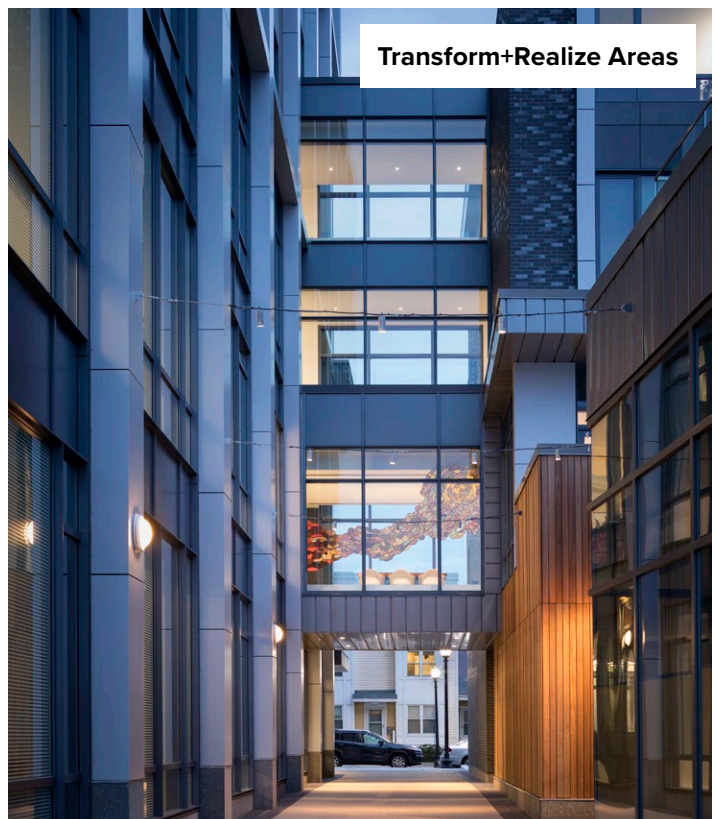
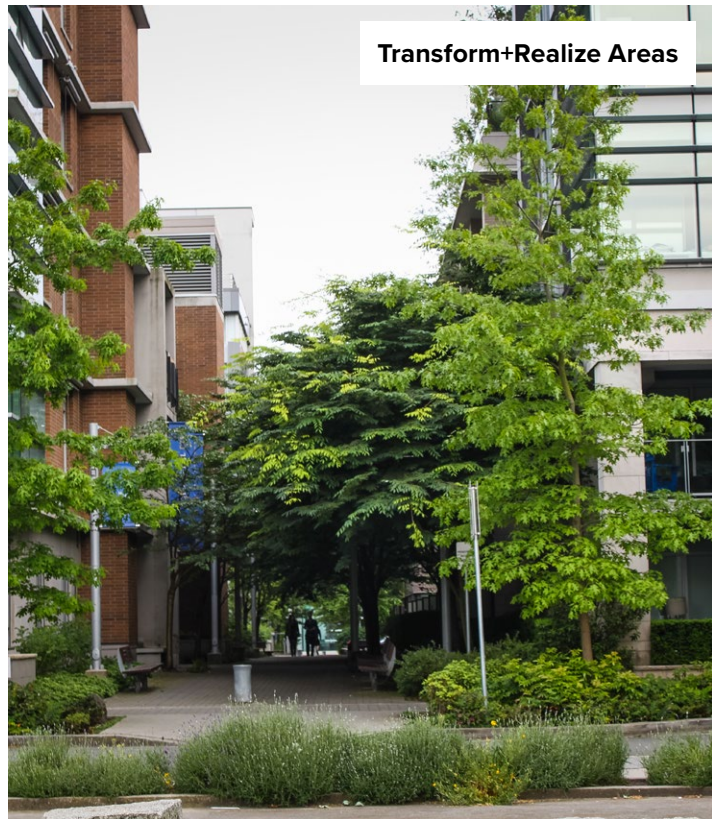
URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

DESIGNING FOR CONNECTIONS

- A. Sites and buildings shall be designed for safe, well lit, and convenient access by pedestrians and bicyclists to encourage movement within the site and between adjacent sites.
- B. Sites and buildings shall contribute to transit access with direct pedestrian paths along the shortest distance between transit stops and potential riders.
- C. Site development shall preserve and enhance existing alley access to promote connectivity.

MID-BLOCK PASSAGES

- D. Sites with a side longer than 400 feet shall provide a direct, public or privately-maintained, and 24/7 publicly-accessible mid-block passage connecting from the sidewalk of one street to the sidewalk on the opposite side of the block.
- E. Mid-block passages may be open-air or covered as long as public access is maintained.
- F. Mid-block connections shall promote convenience and connectivity in the surrounding area.
- G. Mid-block passages must be accessible to all, well-lit, barrier-free, with open continuous visibility for safety, and be at least 16' wide.



Examples of mid-block passages

URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

A.2—Site Design & Open Space

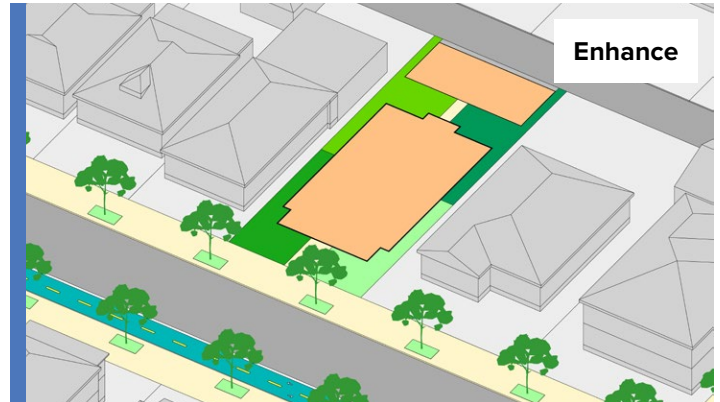
Site design shall integrate with adjacent streets, create privacy zones with distinct boundaries, and integrate stormwater management best practices. Larger developments shall incorporate open space by providing publicly beneficial uses and connect to existing open spaces where applicable.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE TRANSITIONS

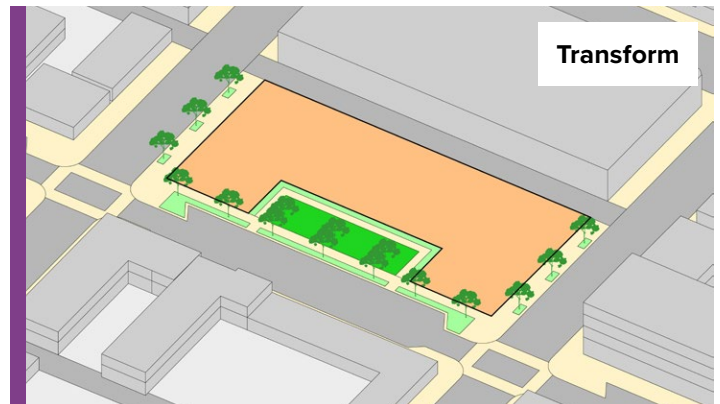
- A. The design of public setbacks, plazas and pedestrian connections shall integrate with the adjacent streetscape. Paving materials and landscaping shall be in conformance with the El Paso Street Design Manual.
- B. Site design shall clearly delineate privacy zones between public and private, semi-private and private, and private and private. Boundary types may include low walls, fences, landscaping, hedge planting, berms, bollards, and differences in elevation.
- C. Fences, hedges, berms, and other landscape barriers shall not be placed on the primary frontage and are generally discouraged to prevent visual barriers. Where appropriate, fence design shall use similar materials, design expression, and range of color and style as the building. Fencing may be appropriate around open space for safety reasons.
- D. Privately-owned public spaces should include street furniture, tree planters with seating, and amenities such as play structures for a variety of ages (such as durable ping-pong tables).

OPEN SPACES

- E. At least 15% of sites with more than 10,000 gross square feet of floor area shall dedicate a publicly-accessible open space, which shall not include area used for parking. Public mid-block passages may count towards the open space requirement. These spaces shall be visible, accessible from public streets, and open to the general public 24/7. These spaces could include decorative paving, or pavers, raised planters with shade materials that also include a bench component
- F. Open spaces shall be designed to connect to existing or planned open space networks, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, following ADA requirements.



Private open space per unit



Public open space



100% lot coverage in downtown

URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

G. Site design shall prevent off-site discharge of untreated water from rainfall events up to and including the 95% storm event by incorporating green infrastructure and low impact development best management practices, such as rain gardens, bioretention and infiltration planters, porous pavements, vegetated swales, green roofs, tree boxes, and rainwater harvesting. Rip rap depressions are not allowed. Attractive stormwater amenities may count towards the 15% open space requirement if they comply with the material and design guidance in this document.



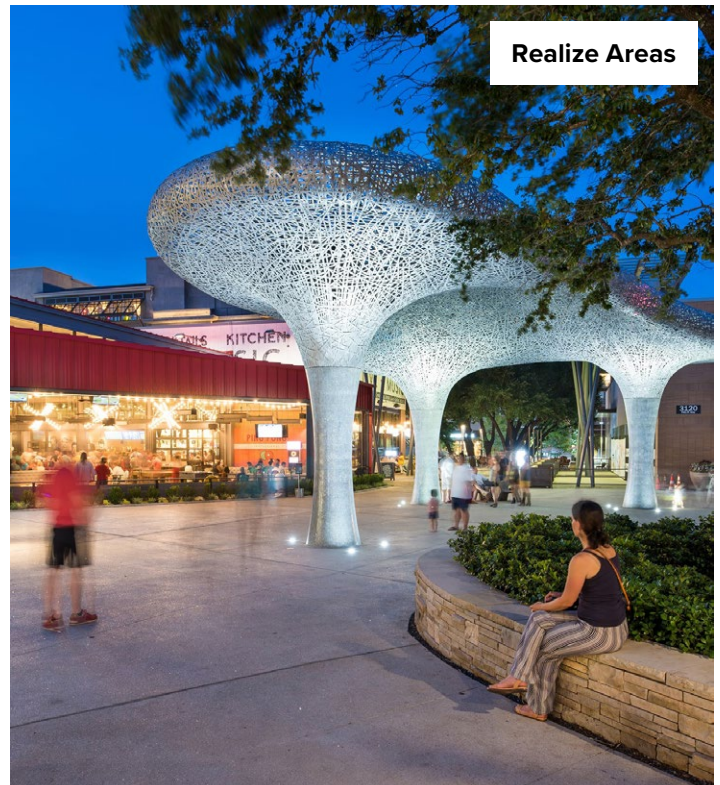
Transform+Realize Areas

The open space is a pedestrian connection and separates public and private uses.



Transform+Realize Areas

Spaces between buildings are important for social congregation.



Realize Areas

Open spaces are opportunities to create dynamic social life within blocks.

URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

A.3—Complete Streets

A complete street approach shall be used for applications proposing alterations within Downtown + Uptown’s sidewalks, alleys, and right-of-way based upon the El Paso Street Design Manual, El Paso Downtown Street Tree Master Plan and El Paso Bike Plan. All streets within the Downtown + Uptown study area are considered Compact Urban for applicable design criteria. Developments shall provide facilities for people to safely walk, bicycle, access transit, and socialize in a manner appropriate to the context. Refer to the Complete Streets policy and Street Design Manual for more information.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- A. Sidewalks shall be present on both sides of every street with an unobstructed walking area no less than 6 feet in width. In the indicated priority streets, the minimum shall be 10 feet to accommodate higher foot traffic. These clear walking areas may need to span across public and private space.
- B. To promote window shopping and easy access into shops and cafes, the unobstructed sidewalk area shall directly abut the building edge along retail and restaurant-oriented streets.
- C. Outdoor café seating areas may be located within a sidewalk or public space. Outdoor dining should be placed along the curblines in a 10’ sidewalk area leaving a clear walk zone of at least 4’ width at the building frontage.

TRANSIT FACILITIES

- D. All new construction shall integrate proposed transit/streetcar stops and include shade shelters and benches if they do not currently exist.
- E. Transit stops shall incorporate pedestrian-scale lighting, appropriate wayfinding, and proper shade shelters with seating.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

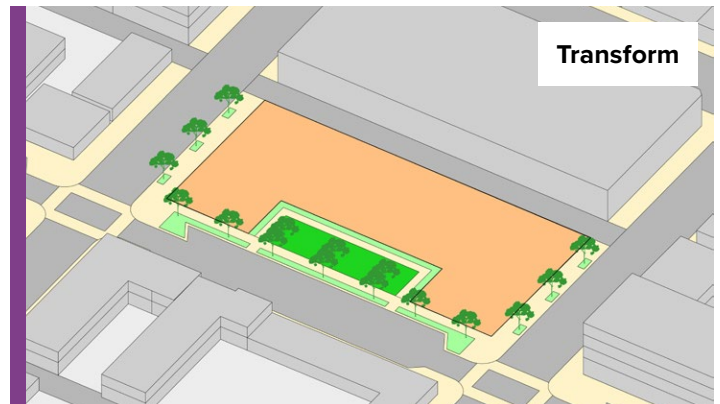
- F. Bicycle lanes shall be designed according to the City of El Paso Bike Plan, El Paso Street Design Manual, State, Federal, and NACTO standards.

VEHICULAR LANES

- G. Vehicular shoulders, travel lanes, and on-street parking lanes shall be the minimum width as recommended by the appropriate state and local requirements.



Bikeway, street trees, and parking behind the building



Curb extensions, street trees, and building at lot line



Shared street, street trees, and building framing public park

URBAN DESIGN SCHEMA

CURB CUTS

- H. Curb cuts are discouraged on principal streets. Shared driveways are encouraged. Alley access is required when present.
- I. Parking garage and parking lot drive curb cuts shall not exceed 20 feet in width, plus curb radii.
- J. Residential surface parking driveway curb cuts shall not exceed 10 feet in width, plus curb radii.
- K. Sidewalks crossing parking lot drives and driveway curb cuts shall maintain a level grade, creating a vehicular speed table, and be ADA compliant. The transition from street level shall be a ramp with a slope of 8.33 percent (1:12) or less.



People walking, biking, and taking buses and private cars share this complete street.

STREET TREES

- L. All projects shall comply with the City of El Paso’s Code of Ordinances as listed in section 18.46.200 Required street trees and 18.46.210 Street tree standards.
- M. The street-tree pattern shall be spaced consistently at an approximate on-center distance not to exceed 30 feet.



Outdoor café seating at the curb allows pedestrians to continue along the street uninterrupted.

LIGHTING

- N. Street lights shall be located at the outer edge of all sidewalks, 14 feet tall, and spaced regularly at least every 50 feet on center.
- O. Lighting shall be compatible and not conflict with tree canopy.
- P. Outdoor sconce lighting is required on all new buildings for interest, safety, and illumination.



High quality street furniture and plantings create a welcoming environment.

STREET FURNITURE

- Q. Benches and raised planters that include an integrated bench seat shall be provided along retail frontages at a minimum of two per block face.
- R. Benches typically shall be placed near the curb and aside a planted tree in the direction that provides the greatest opportunity for shade. On streets with 6’ sidewalks and a minimum of 4’ of parkways, two benches shall be placed perpendicular to the street and facing each other in between tree planting areas.
- S. Drinking water fountains shall be available at every public informal gathering area, open space, park, and playground. Refer to the City’s Park Standards for more information.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.1—Ground Floor

Ground floors shall activate and enliven the public realm and create interesting pedestrian journeys, and ensure a measure of privacy for residential uses. Research shows that pedestrian activity is higher when visitors are stimulated every 5 seconds, which is why streets with frequent door openings and features are more active and successful than streets with long blank walls.

LOCATION OF GROUND FLOOR USES

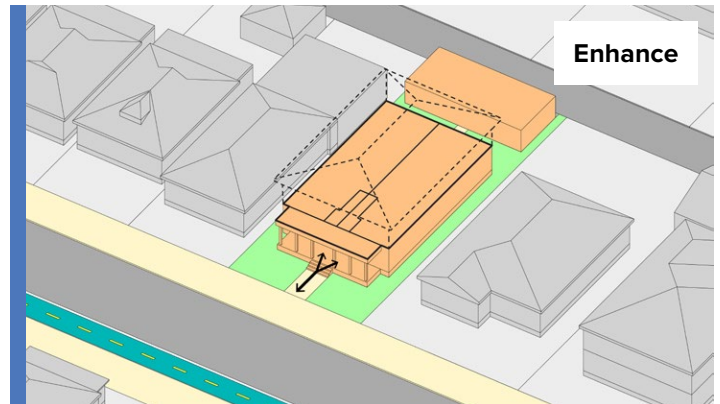
- A. Within 40 feet of the primary frontage lot line, ground floor areas shall be routinely occupiable by people engaged in activities related to the building’s uses, such as retail, service businesses, classrooms, building lobbies, residential units, professional offices, manufacturing, and research.
- B. Actively-occupied interior spaces shall be located adjacent to actively-occupied exterior spaces, and vice versa.
- C. When present within the building, residential uses shall be located adjacent to any existing residential uses on abutting lots.
- D. Service areas shall be located in the back of the property where possible and screened from public streets, sidewalks, and open spaces.

SETBACKS

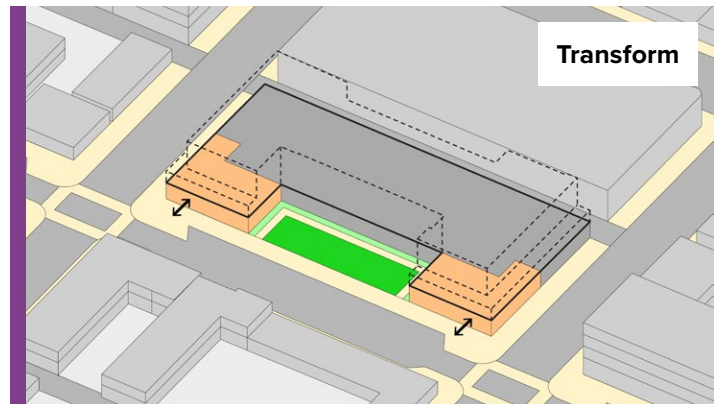
- E. Residential uses may setback from property lines to provide front yards enabling enhanced landscape treatment for aesthetics, front yards, porches, seating areas, and pocket parks.
- F. Non-residential uses may setback from property lines to create additional public space. Where setbacks are present, they shall include features to activate the space such as tables and chairs, trees in planters with perimeter seating shade structures, trees, art and sculptures, little libraries, reading areas, games and other activities.

BUILDING ENTRANCES

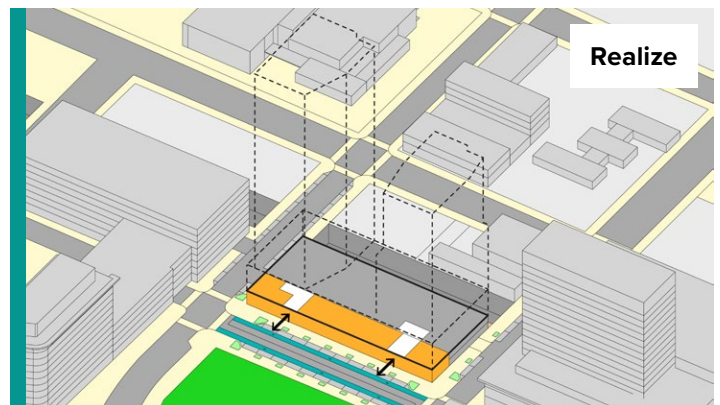
- G. Primary entrances shall be located on public streets, prominent, accessible and well-lit at night.
- H. Entrances shall be located along safe walking routes, in relation to crosswalks, and for facilitation of public transit use.
- I. At least one building entrance shall front on a street where the building abuts a street.
- J. Each separately leased retail space shall have an



Individual entrances



Activated frontage and open space



Activated frontage and lobbies for vertical circulation

BUILDING DESIGN

individual public entrance onto the abutting street.

RETAIL GUIDELINES

- K. Retail façades shall have a minimum glazing area of 60%.
- L. Retail entrances shall have alcoves between 15 and 100 square feet in size, paved to match the sidewalk, to be able to open doors without obstructing the sidewalk.
- M. Large floorplate retail (greater than 10,000 leasable square feet) shall consider setting back the larger floor plate use to accommodate smaller commercial spaces along the frontage and, if relevant, properly address the public realm to support active street life by spacing the door openings no greater than 30 feet apart.
- N. Stand-alone retail buildings are discouraged. If stand-alone retail is unavoidable, the building shall have a distinctive roofline and be adaptable for changes in future users. Upper story mezzanines and terraces are recommended.
- O. Retail uses shall refer to the stand-alone signage guidelines document.

SERVICE AREAS

- P. Mechanical equipment, refuse storage (dumpsters), service areas, and loading areas not entirely enclosed within buildings shall be (1) located outside required setbacks and not within 10 feet of any property line unless in an alley, (2) permanently screened from view from adjacent public streets and parks and from abutting property under separate ownership when on the ground, and (3) meet all city, state and federal noise regulations.



Grade separation gives ground floor residences privacy from street life.



Ground floor units are slightly elevated to foster a sense of safety and provide privacy.



The building is set back from the street to create a public engagement area.



Individual entrances for each retail store creates an active frontage.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.2—Massing

Building massing shall contribute to a sense of place by framing public spaces and creating harmony between existing and new buildings with contextually appropriate heights and setbacks.

ORIENTATION

- A. Building mass shall generally parallel streets at the ground level.
- B. Upper-story orientation may vary, provided that buildings continue to create a sense of enclosure to public streets and parks.

DAYLIGHTING

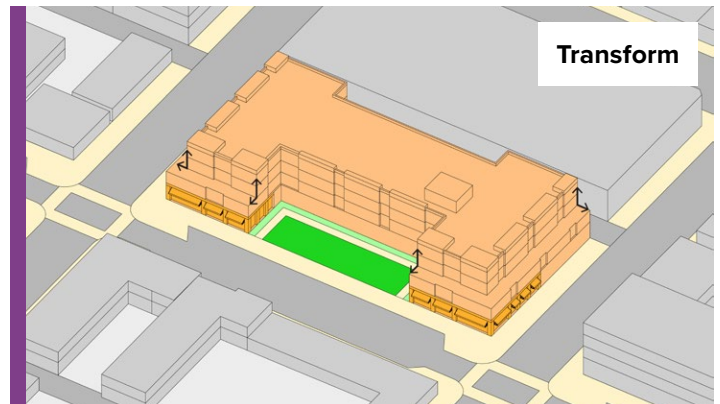
- C. Developments with internal spaces framed by buildings shall have courtyards to provide daylight on internal façades.

TRANSITIONS

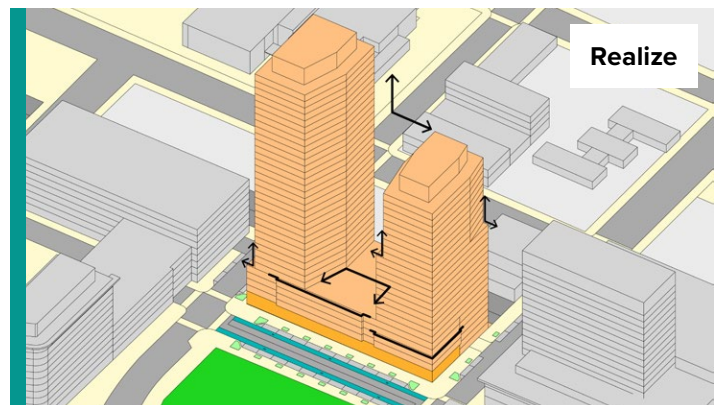
- D. Building heights shall transition to any nearby residential uses with more restrictive height limits.
- E. Buildings facing a residential use with more restrictive height limits shall not exceed the maximum height permitted in the residential zoning district by more than 20 feet before stepping back for residential privacy.



Traditional massing

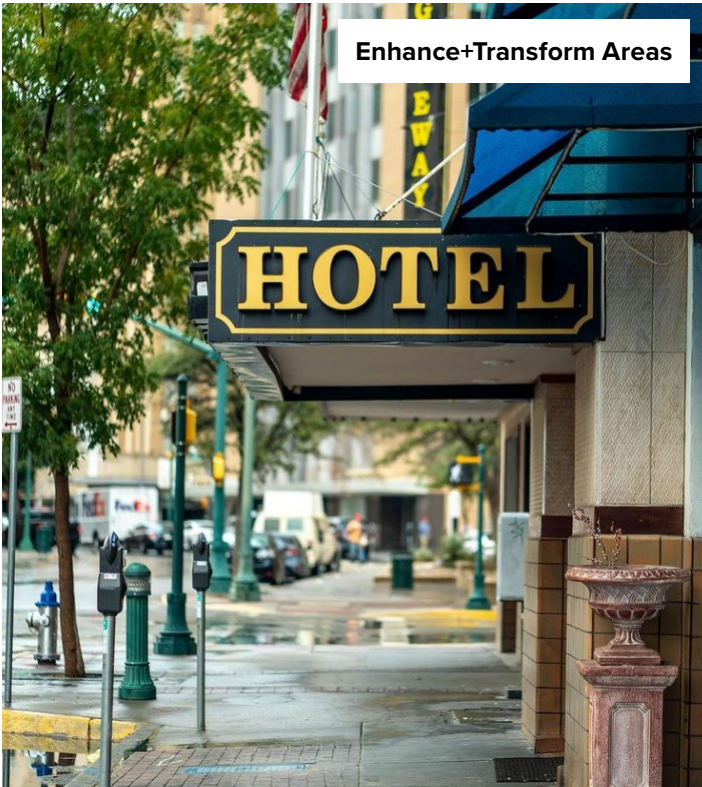


Transitions to the context with setbacks



Increased density by transit

BUILDING DESIGN



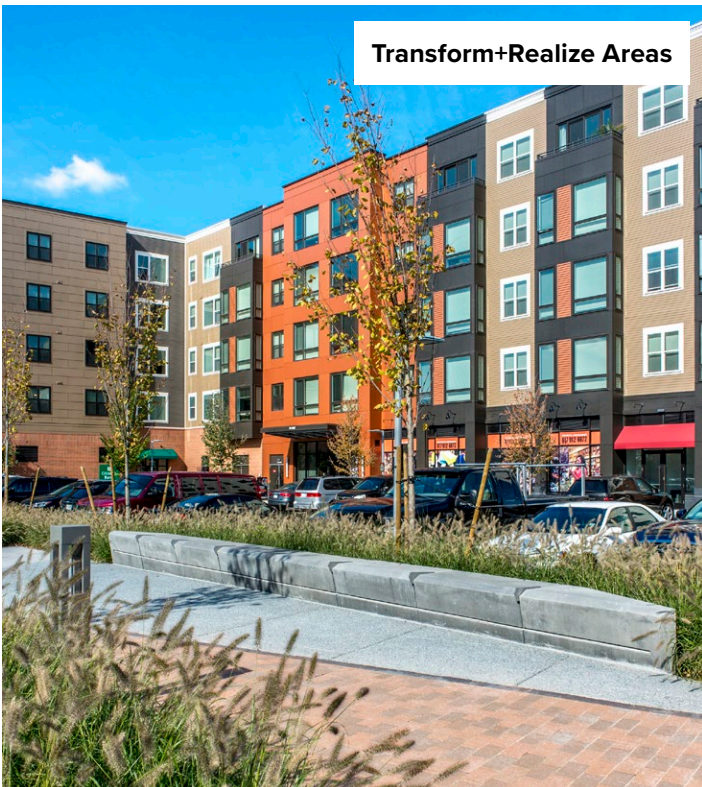
Enhance+Transform Areas

Zero setback massing with awnings over entrances are encouraged.



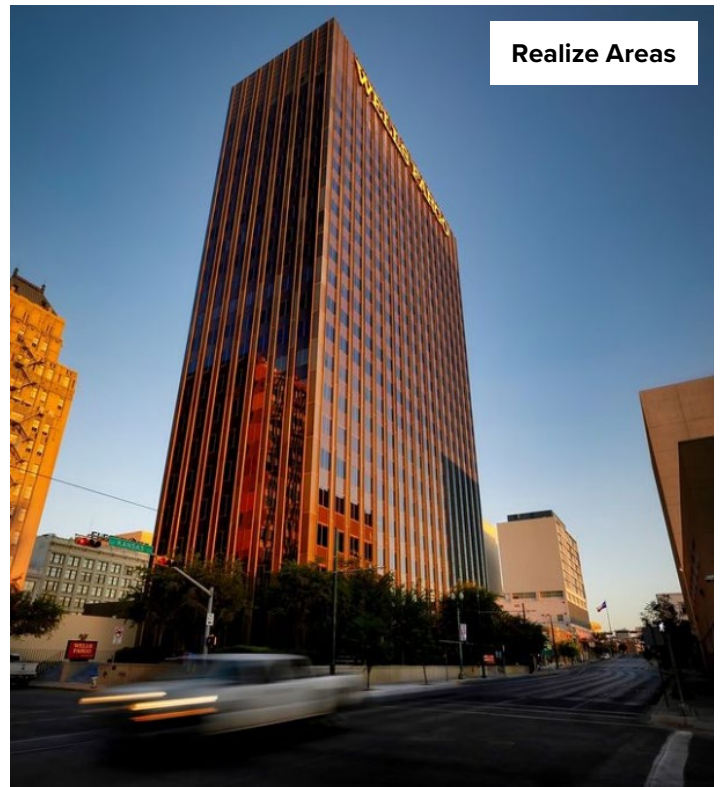
Transform+Realize Areas

Bold colors, projections, and recesses make for an interesting facade.



Transform+Realize Areas

This typical wood-frame structure is articulated to appear as many buildings.



Realize Areas

Additions to the Downtown's skyline are encouraged.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.3—Parking

Developments shall put people first. The visual and functional impact of motor vehicle parking shall be minimized to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit as the preferred modes of travel.

BICYCLE PARKING

- A. Sufficient bike infrastructure shall be provided to accommodate both visitor and resident bike parking located in a designated building setback close to the building door opening or inside the building lobby for security purposes.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING

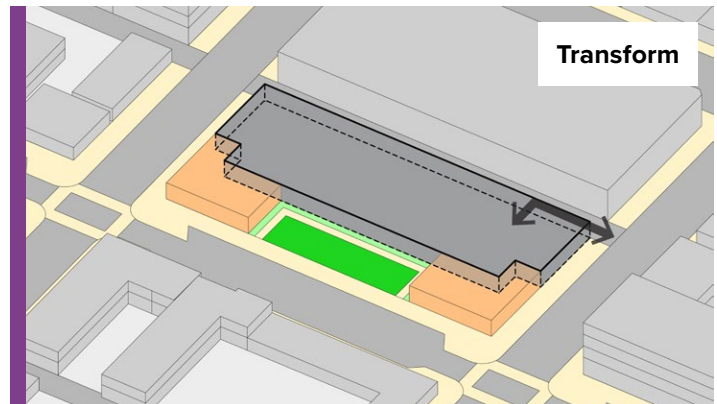
- B. Surface motor vehicle parking is prohibited in the area between building frontages and public streets or and shall not be permitted adjacent to public parks and open spaces as part of new development.
- C. Access drives shall provide direct access to parking and loading elsewhere on the site. Each 100 feet of frontage shall have a maximum of one access drive.
- D. Access drives and loading zones are encouraged to be shared with abutting sites, both existing and planned.
- E. Where possible, access drives shall be located on side streets or alleys.

MOTOR VEHICLE PARKING GARAGES

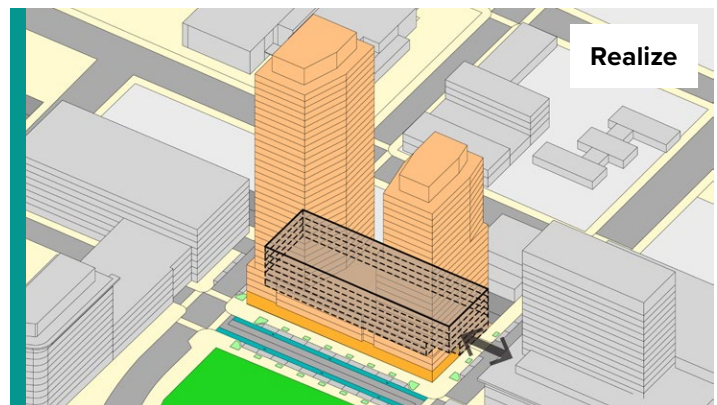
- F. Parking garages shall be located within the interior of the site to minimize visibility from public view.
- G. People walking and using wheeled devices shall have direct access to parking garages from an adjacent public street via an electrified access door.
- H. New parking garages shall be constructed with consideration to shared uses either with adjacent properties and/or as a public private partnership to promote sustainability and walkability.



Parking access from alleyway where available



Parking access from side streets

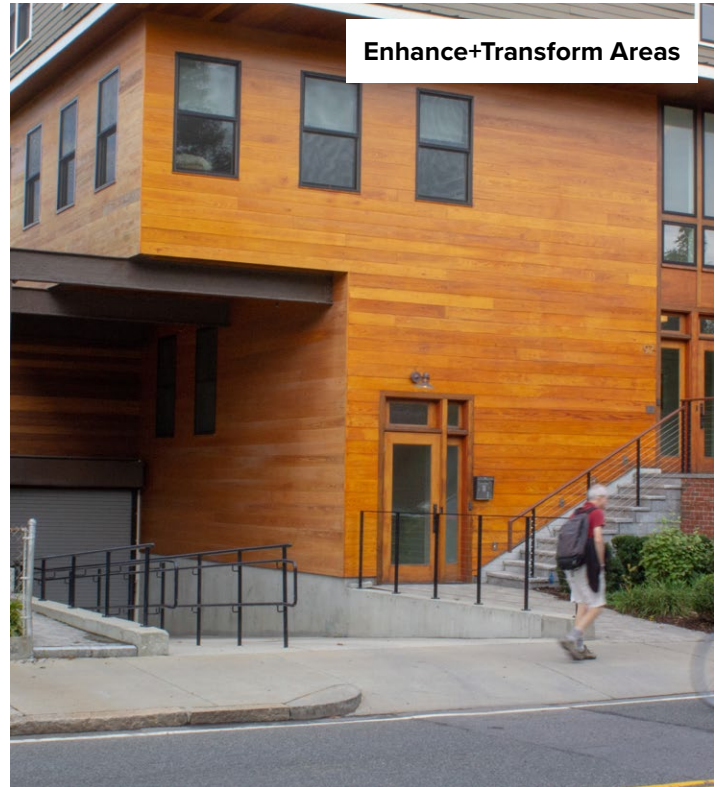


Parking internal to block

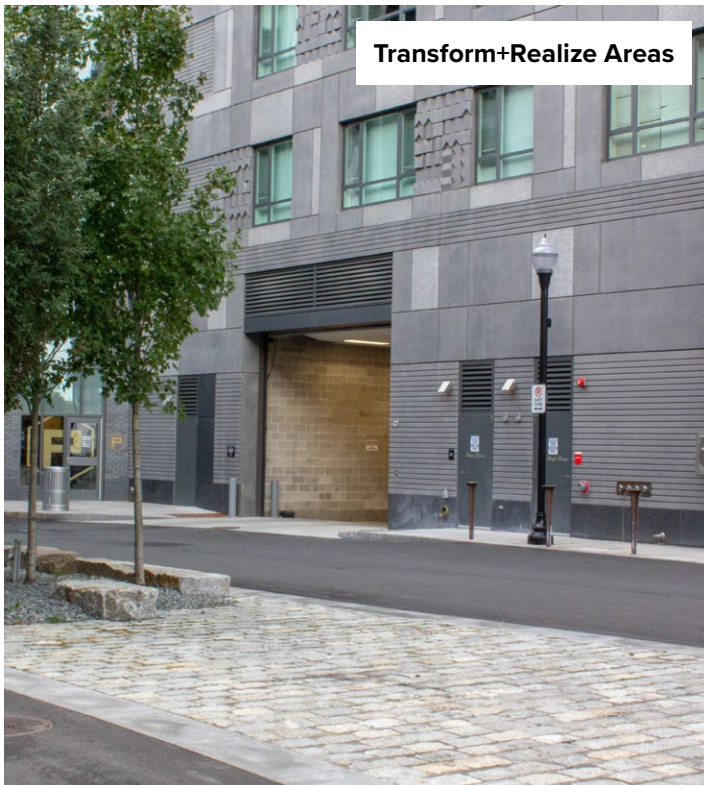
BUILDING DESIGN



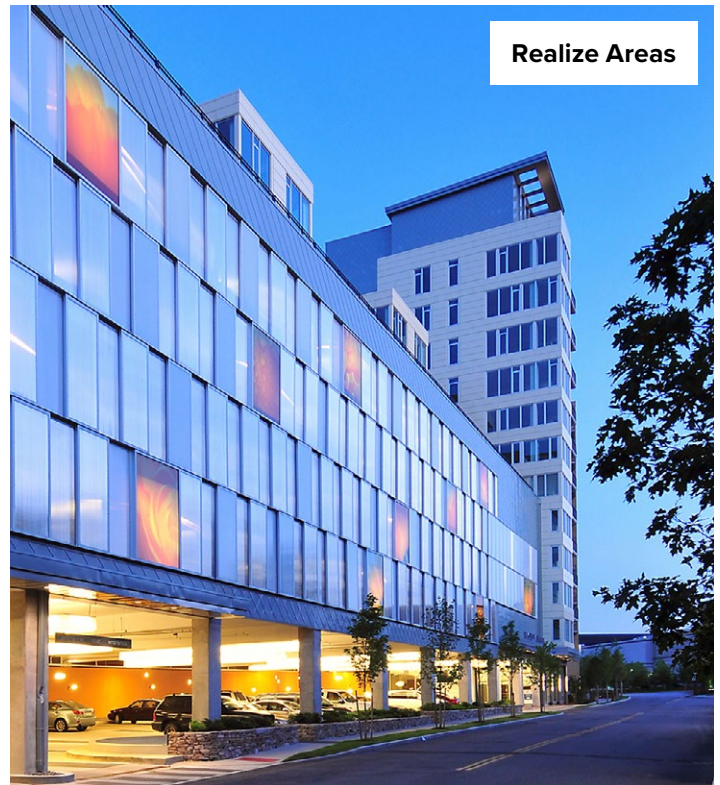
***ALL** Visitor bicycle parking in a setback located close to the building entrance.*



Vehicle ramp integrated into the building massing and the surrounding neighborhood.



The service entrance is off an alley and integrates with the building style.



This parking structure is tastefully obscured with translucent glass and art.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.4—Amenity Space

Private amenity spaces shall be provided for multi-family residential and designed for social interaction between residents. Private amenity spaces are in addition to the required public open spaces. Example amenity spaces include recreation areas for children, outdoor seating, workspaces, fitness areas, and meeting rooms.

AMENITY SPACE REQUIREMENTS

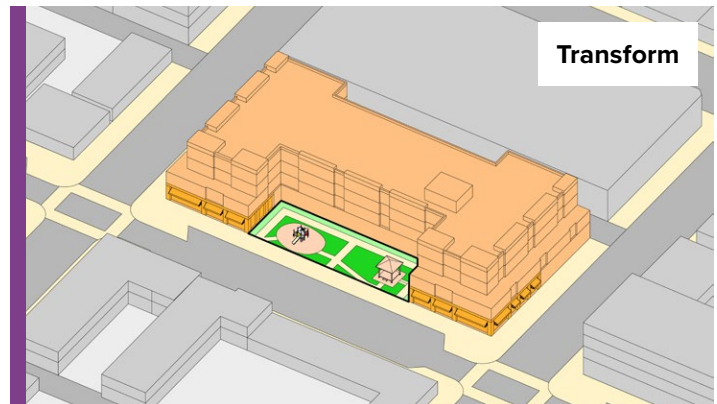
- A. Buildings containing 10 or more dwelling units shall provide a minimum of 25 square feet per dwelling unit of public space, private outdoor amenity space or shared amenity space. If public open space, this area would count towards site open space requirements.
- B. Shared amenity spaces shall not be less than 500 square feet and include ample natural light.

LOCATIONS AND USES

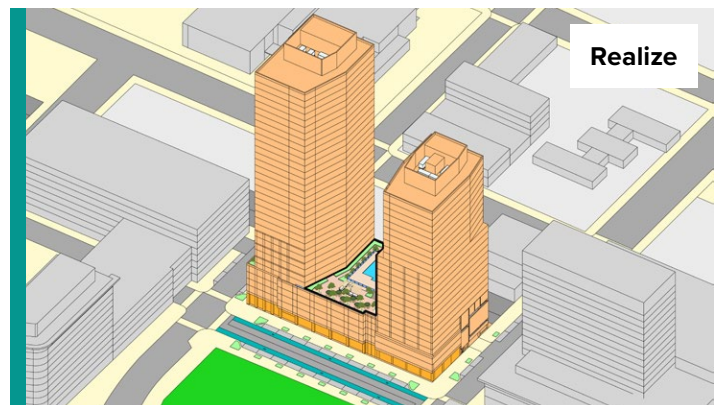
- C. Amenity spaces shall be located on the site to help activate streets.
- D. Courtyards, rear yards, terraces, and rooftops shall be used for outdoor amenity spaces including patios, decks, children’s play areas, and gardens.
- E. Interior shared amenity spaces shall be located along common paths of travel and with good access to natural light.



Private yards



Pocket park

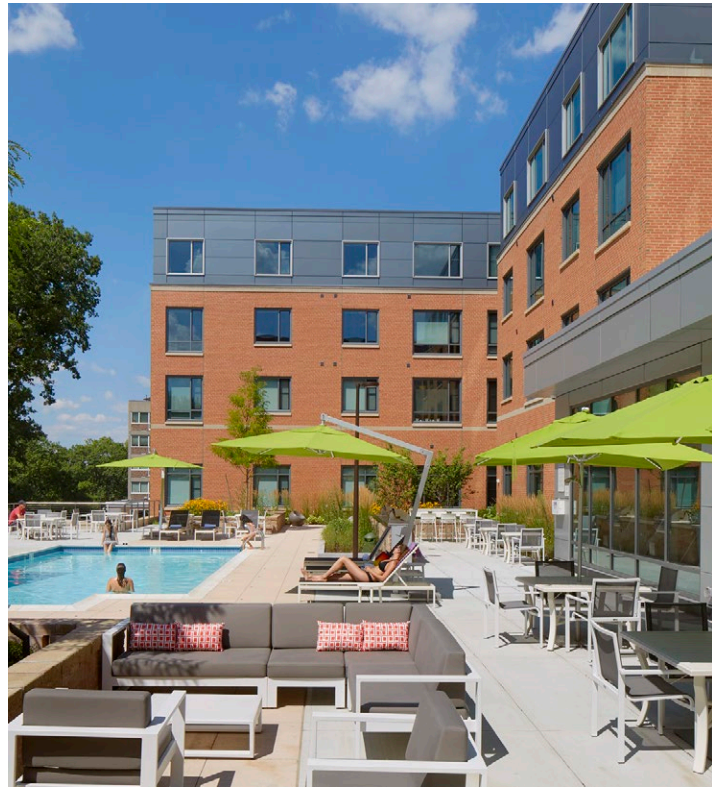


Parking podiums with amenities

BUILDING DESIGN



As unit sizes become more compact, it is important that amenity spaces be centrally located, and large enough to accommodate desired uses.



The amenity space is framed by the building to create a sense of enclosure.



Indoor and outdoor amenity spaces are preferably linked.



Natural light is an important feature for amenity spaces.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.5—Compact Living

Compact living units shall follow specific interior, shared space, and transportation regulations. Compact living is intended to decrease the cost of housing by increasing the supply, reducing unit size, and lowering transportation costs with added transit services while also facilitating community cohesion.

COMPACT LIVING DEFINITION

- A. Compact living schema shall apply to new developments of 10 units or more with unit sizes less than 500 square feet for a studio, 650 for a one-bedroom, 850 for a two bedroom, or three-bedroom 950 square feet.

UNIT INTERIORS

- B. Each unit shall provide a minimum ceiling height of 9 feet, and minimum windows sizes of at least 15% of habitable room area for access to daylight and natural ventilation.

ADDITIONAL SHARED AMENITY SPACE

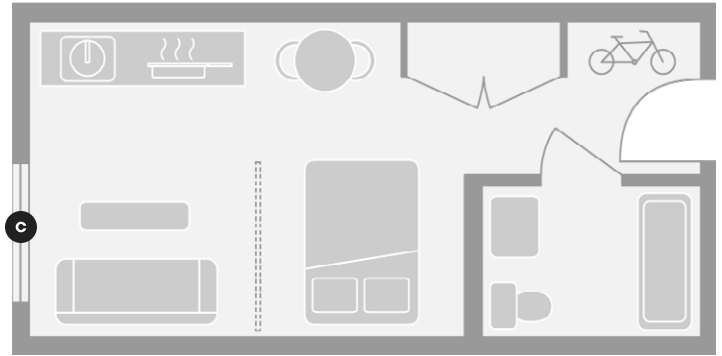
- C. To account for the smaller unit sizes, buildings with dwelling units within the compact living definition shall provide 20 square feet of amenity space for each of the first 30 units above in addition to the 25 square feet required in C.5. Amenity Space.

TRANSPORTATION

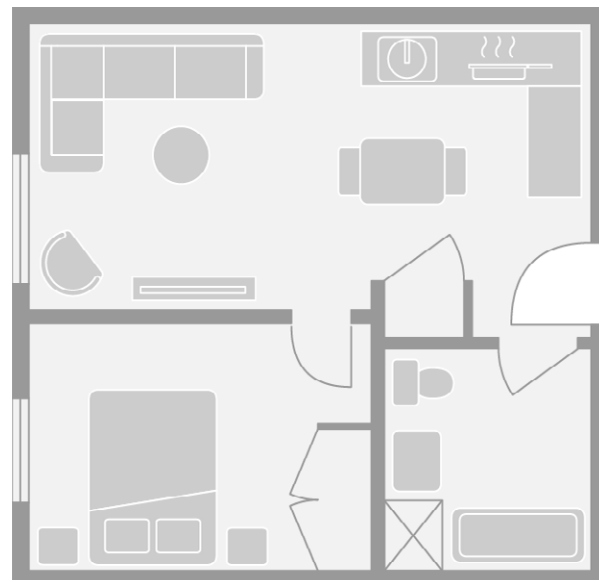
- D. Compact living units shall be designed to promote a car-free lifestyle by locating adjacent to or contributing to dedicated bicycle infrastructure, public transit, and safe sidewalks.

STORAGE

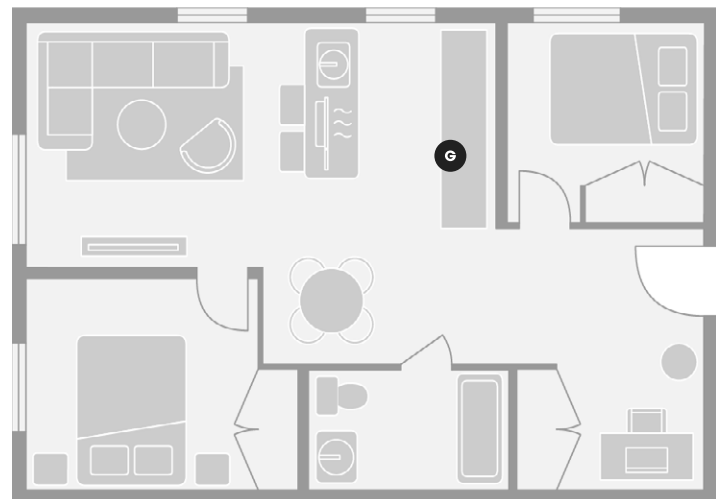
- E. Compact living units shall provide sufficient storage space. Closets or cabinets shall provide space for essential items such as clothing, linens, and kitchen and bathroom supplies. Unit storage space may be supplemented with common area storage space. Other creative solutions should be considered to reduce in-unit storage needs.



Studio <500 square feet



One Bedroom <650 square feet

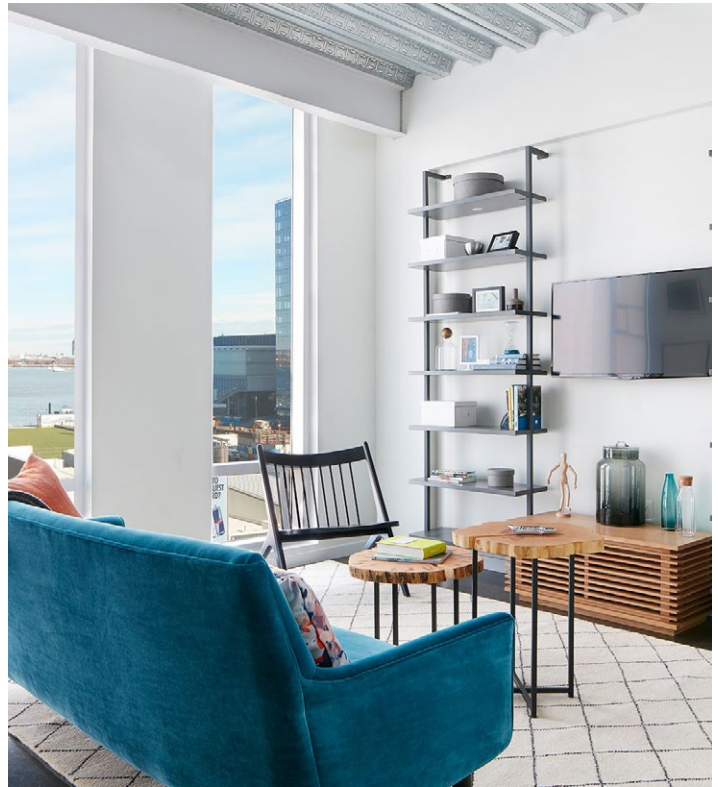


Two Bedroom <850 square feet

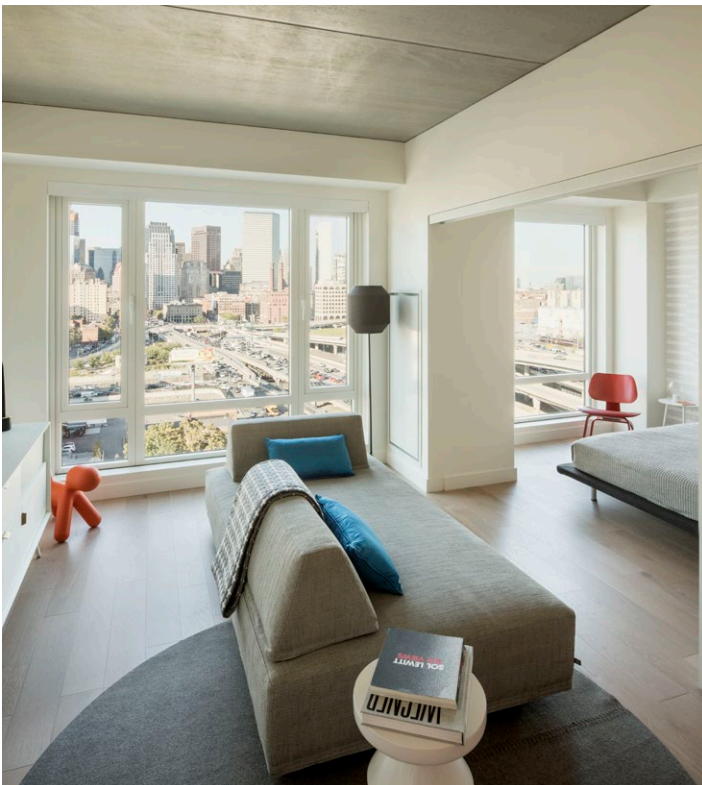
BUILDING DESIGN



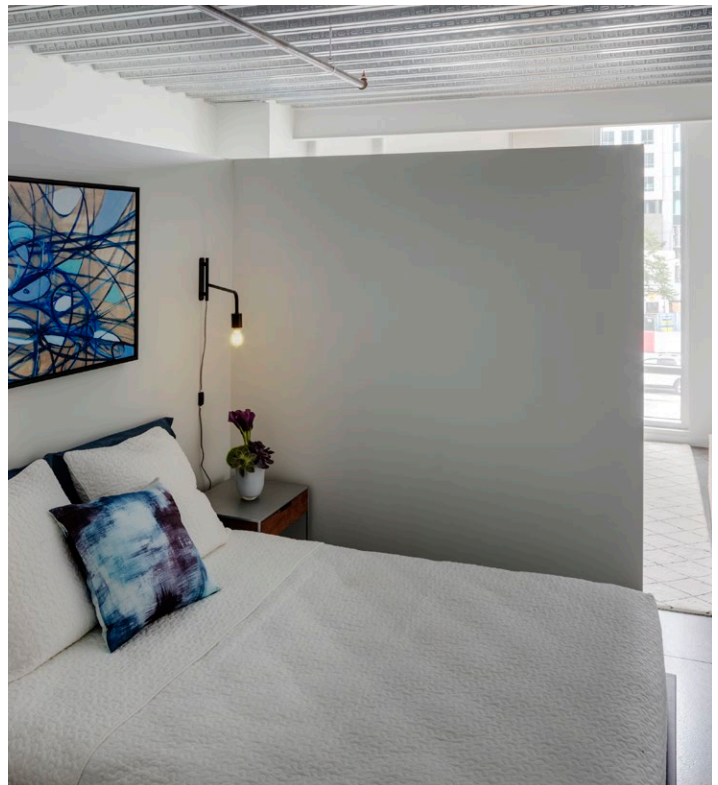
Compact kitchen with sufficient storage capacity and natural light.



Tall floor-to-ceiling heights make compact spaces feel larger.



Compact living room with a sliding partition to the bedroom.



Moveable walls create zones for different uses.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.6—Roof

Roofs shall reinforce the building design from the perspective of a pedestrian and minimize the visual impact of mechanical systems.

ROOFLINE

- A. Rooflines shall shape and define building entries and corners.
- B. Roof tops may incorporate distinct features such as roof forms, cornices, eaves and parapets.
- C. Dormers shall be habitable and sized no larger than necessary to hold window(s) and framing.
- D. Solar panels shall follow rooflines and where possible be integrated with the roof design.

HORIZONTAL ROOF USES

- E. Horizontal rooftop surface area not otherwise occupied by mechanical penthouses, properly screened equipment, renewable energy infrastructure, or other ancillary structures may be used for vegetation, 24/7 accessible amenity space, or a combination thereof. Amenity spaces on roofs shall have access to the building edge for views.

SCREENING

- F. Vent stacks, roof vents, and other mechanical protrusions shall be painted the color of the roof or a dark color so that the obstruction fades from view.
- G. Mechanical equipment shall have parapets, cupolas or dormers to screen them as much as possible from public view.



Traditional sloped roof



Horizontal roof space is an opportunity for solar panels

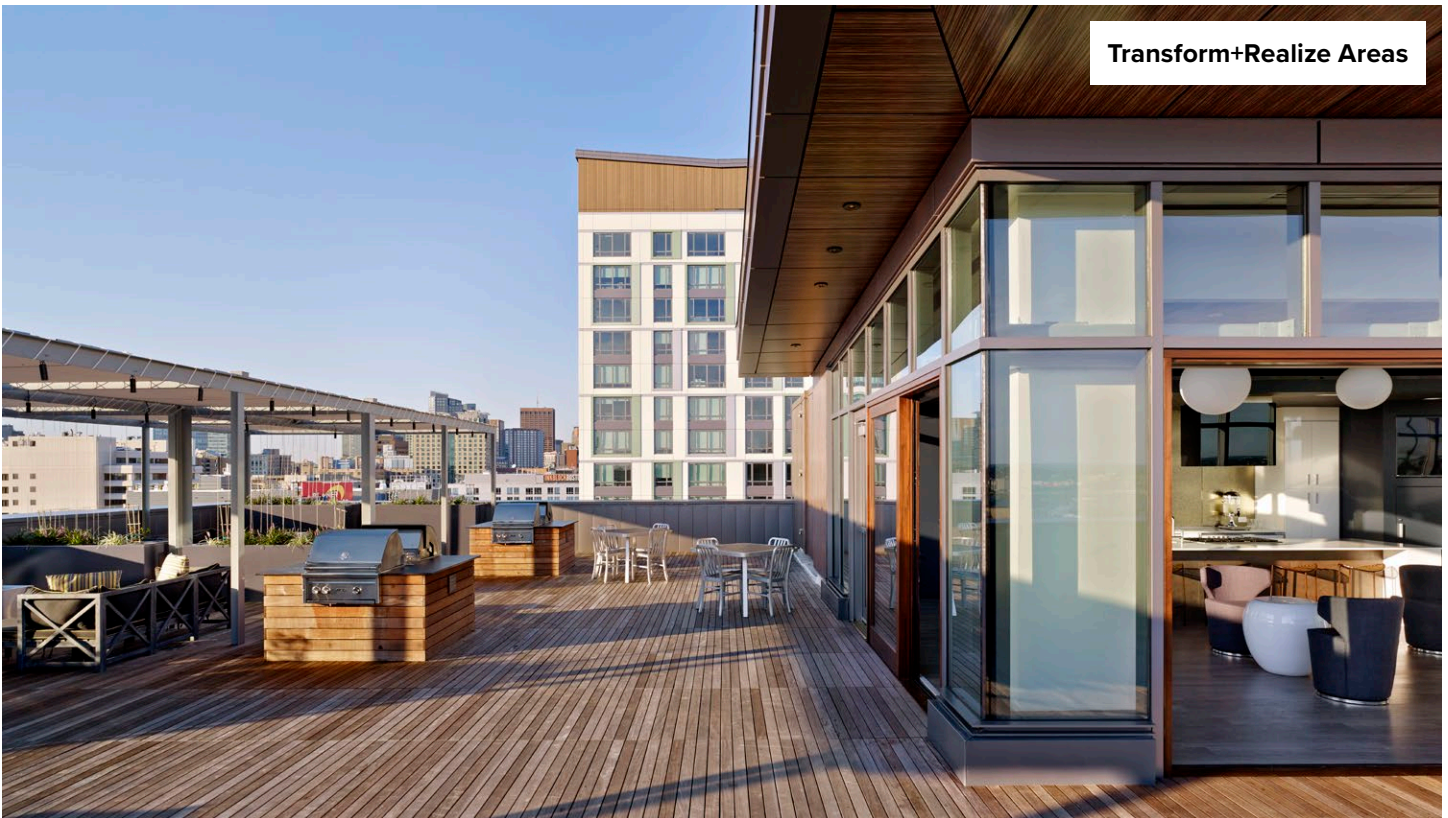


Horizontal roof with uses

BUILDING DESIGN



Horizontal roofs are recommended to include green infrastructure for stormwater.



Roof tops are preferred locations for large amenity spaces and can offer great views.

BUILDING DESIGN

B.7—Architectural Materials and Details

Architectural materials and details shall interact harmoniously with adjacent buildings and add depth and interest to the building elevations. Building materials in the Enhance areas should be context sensitive. New buildings in all districts shall be designed from both a pedestrian eye-level and long-distance views with details that contribute to a cohesive impression of high quality.

360° DESIGN

- A. Architectural character and expression shall be of consistently high quality on all exterior portions and sides of a structure.
- B. Accessory components and building systems including but not limited to porches, canopies, railings, gates, fences, garden walls, lighting, mechanical penthouses, balconies, doors, weather protection, and gutters shall reinforce the overall building style.

MATERIALS

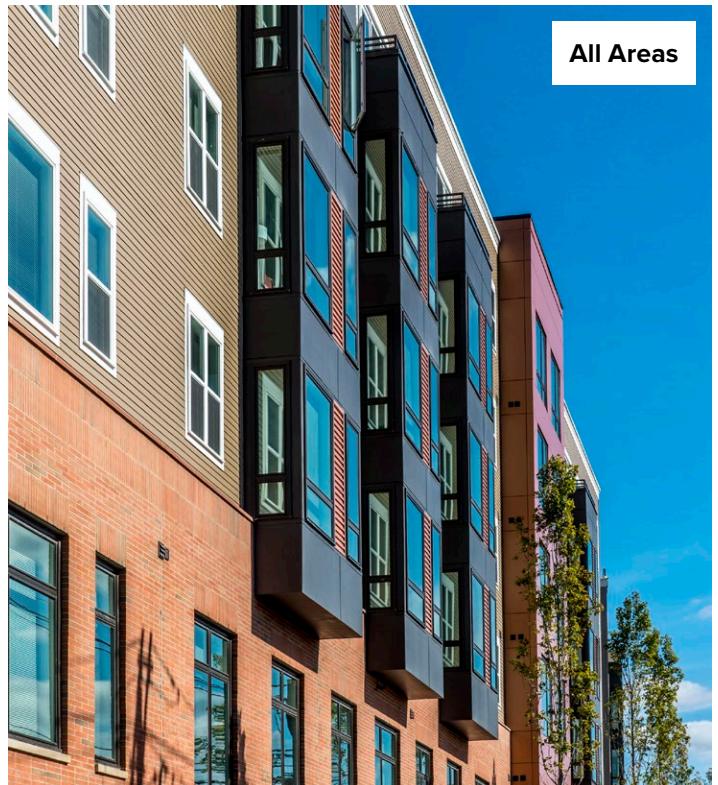
- C. In the Enhance area, all sides of buildings (including exterior walls, windows, roofs, accessory structures) shall have a material palette that is coordinated with the predominant neighborhood materials.
- D. Preferred materials: masonry (brick, granite, stone, architectural precast concrete); wood (painted or sealed with an opaque or semisolid stain or imitation wood rainscreen), metal (natural colored or painted steel, aluminum, copper, or bronze); and glass.
- E. Chain link fence, barbed wire, razor wire, and chicken wire are not permitted where visible from a street, park, public facility, or adjacent residential uses.

MATERIAL DETAILS

- F. Where masonry is used, door and window lintels, sills, and jambs, and flat masonry surfaces shall have detailed coursing (such as soldier courses, herringbone or checkerboard patterns, etc.) that adds interest and pattern to the façade. Design details shall be provided at building entrances and framing commercial tenant areas at the ground floor.
- G. Details around doors and windows shall have extensions or recesses to provide a minimum of 4” of depth to the glass within the window or door frame.



Masonry details should add depth, including on precast panels.



The mix of materials should be complimentary.

BUILDING DESIGN

H. Fiber cement panels shall not have exposed fasteners, and shall have detailed setbacks and joint patterns that enliven the elevation. Details that provide design interest, such as frames, insets, or reveals shall be provided around doors and windows.

FAÇADE PROJECTIONS

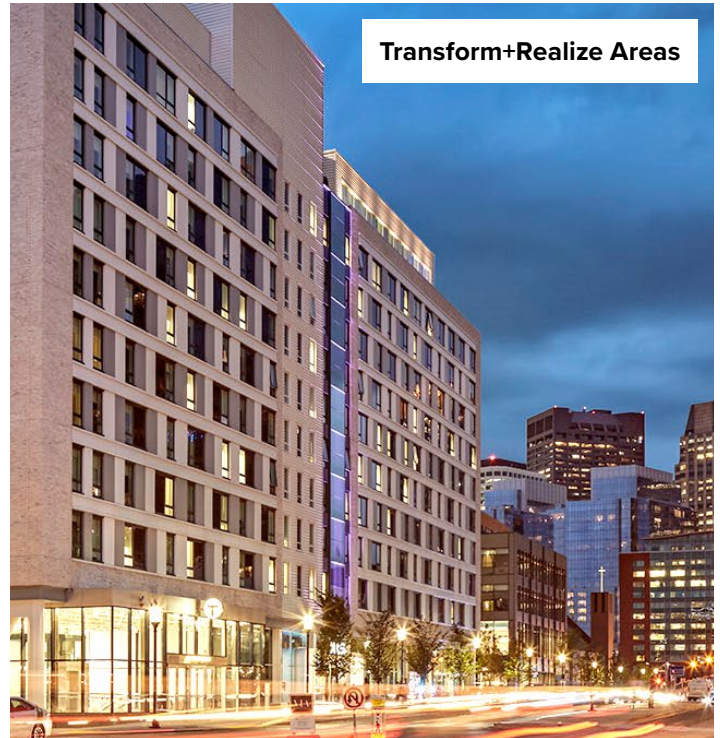
- I. Main entrances shall have canopies of at least 5’ projection for tenant weather protection. At entrances and retail/restaurant/commercial facades, canopy projections with details such as metal hangers or support brackets, free-standing signage, and decorative light fixtures are encouraged.
- J. All balconies and stair railings shall have a level of detail that adds sophistication to the façade.

WINDOWS

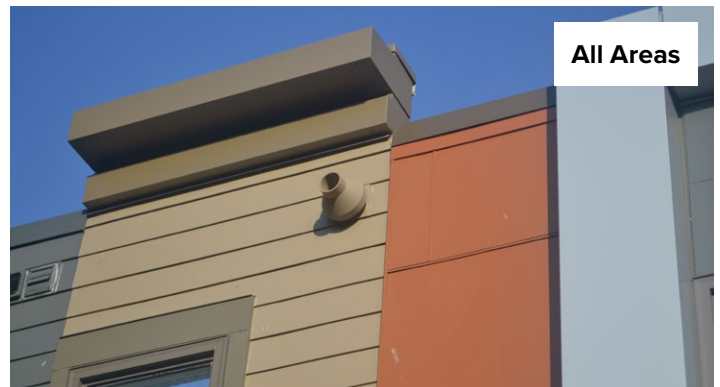
- K. Buildings shall provide openings and windows that overlook public streets and open spaces to establish a human connection.
- L. The minimum amount of clear glass for non-residential uses shall be 65% of the area of the façade at the ground floor and 25% of the entire façade. The minimum amount of clear glass for residential uses shall be 20% of the entire façade.
- M. Commercial space users shall not block windows with any signage or partitions that obscure views into the building.

LIGHTING

- N. Building lighting shall encourage pedestrian activity and safety at all hours while respecting residential uses.
- O. Entryways and areas of high activity shall be appropriately illuminated while minimizing potential light glare, spill and light pollution.
- P. Outdoor building sconces are required to add interest to building façade and additional light on the street. This is required for all multifamily, commercial, and mixed-use development.



Masonry details should add depth, including on precast panels.



Exhaust vents and other mechanical attachments should match the facade.



Colors, materials, and design details combine to create an overall pleasing architectural style.

BUILDING DESIGN

ATTACHMENTS AND ENCROACHMENTS

- Q. Dryer vents and other supply and exhaust vent attachments to a façade must be painted to match the surrounding material.
- R. Overhead weather protection shall be provided at all common entrances to provide residents and guests protection from the elements as well as architectural interest.
- S. The upper side of weather protection elements shall be designed such that they do not create unsightly conditions or glare from sunlight for upper floors.
- T. Allowable signs and weather protection shall be the only first-floor attachments allowed to occupy the public right-of-way. On the second floor and above, balconies, bay windows, eaves, lights, unenclosed fire escapes, and signs may occupy the public right-of-way. Attachments above motorways shall be at least 15 feet above grade. Attachments above sidewalks shall be at least 10 feet above grade.
- U. Antennas and radar dishes shall not be permitted where visible from public streets or public parks.



Canopies, signage, lighting, and corner windows emphasize the entrance.

BUILDING DESIGN



Brick soldier courses, stepping in and out, variation in the masonry itself, and deep recesses and insets add richness to the façade.



The fiber cement color, linear pattern, and window frame composition add visual interest to the building architecture.