

Virtual Community Workshop 1 Summary

July 23, 2020

San Marcos Design Standards and Guidelines Update

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the Downtown Design Guidelines Virtual Community Workshop held on July 23, 2020. This document includes the results of various polling responses obtained as part of the virtual workshop as well as provides high-level analysis and observations interpreting the workshop results. Results from this virtual workshop will be taken into consideration during the update to the downtown design guidelines along with other input received from focus group meetings, the Planning and Zoning Commission/City Council Joint Workshop, and Kickoff survey results.

In January, 2020, the San Marcos City Council provided direction to update the design standards and guidelines using the guidance of the previous consultants, Winter & Company. The update to the design standards and guidelines will include new standards to address design issues, new graphics to clearly illustrate the standards and guidelines, and shall be tailored to various contexts within downtown.

The first virtual community workshop for the project was held on July 23, 2020, and asked community members to consider a variety of factors for new development in the downtown including massing, articulation, building materials and street level design. Participants registered for the virtual event ahead of time and received a link to the Zoom meeting. 91 people registered for the event and 55 devices logged in using the link provided. It's possible that more than one person was participating per device. The meeting began with an introduction by city staff, an explanation of the meeting and how to participate virtually, and led into the first set of polling questions, described in the "Workshop Participants."

Outreach for the event included virtual platforms such as sponsored social media posts, emails to stakeholders, and e-newsletters. In addition, a postcard invitation was mailed to all property owners and physical addresses within the downtown boundary. Direct virtual and physical invitations reached approximately 2,750 individuals. The workshop presentation and event video can be found online at www.sanmarcostx.gov/downtowndesign.

Workshop Participants

To begin the meeting, staff conducted three polling questions to ensure participants understood how to answer the questions using the live polling tool on Zoom. These questions also provided important information about the participants. In total, 39 people participated in these initial polling questions. However, as these questions were asked at the beginning of the meeting, some people could have joined during the presentation and before the later activities, and others could have stopped participating before then. A series of three questions were asked through these initial polls.



What type of device are you using?

Computer/laptop: 32

Phone: 6

iPad/tablet: 1

How many people are using the same device to participate?

One: 32

Two: 5

More than two: 2

Are you a San Marcos resident?

Yes: 29

No: 10

In addition to learning how many people were participating and had figured out how to respond to the polling option, these questions also provided information about how participants were responding. The first question alerted workshop facilitators that people would be seeing the polling questions in different ways based on the format of their device, so we needed to provide sufficient time for the content prior to beginning a polling question as the polling screen covered the content for those using a phone, iPad or tablet. The second question also alerted us that since some participants were sharing a device for the workshop, they would have to discuss the questions for workshop activities, come to an agreement and then respond. Not only does this indicate more time may be needed for the answer periods, but also that some participants may not completely agree on answers to questions asked in Activities 1 and 3, and the answers may be representative of a compromise. Finally, asking if a participant is a San Marcos resident is a standard question for all community engagement. While approximately 25% of workshop participants indicated that they are not San Marcos residents, their participation in the workshop indicates interest in the project and focus on San Marcos' downtown. These participants may still work downtown, own or operate a business downtown, own property downtown, or shop downtown.

Presentation

Following the first set of polling questions, a short presentation outlined key meeting objectives and introduced the project team. Staff then explained the project background, the current design contexts that comprise the downtown and the zoning districts that the downtown falls within. Staff then turned the presentation over to Winter & Company, the consultant for the project, who gave an overview of existing feedback received to date in the project, an explanation of design topics that will be covered during this project, and an explanation of design traditions downtown. After explaining how these design traditions, which primarily come from the Downtown Historic District, will be used to determine an approach for other design variables in this project, the consultant team concluded the presentation to move onto the activities.

ACTIVITY 1: VISUAL PREFERENCING

The objective for Activity 1 was to gauge the community's opinion about development compatible for downtown. This activity addressed downtown as a whole, rather than each design context individually. In order to collect participant's opinions about potential development, a series of building images were presented and participants responded in the form of live polling questions. Each question received between 44 and 47 responses from those logged into the event.

Images illustrating a variety of building features were presented for each of the following building types:

- Apartment
- Townhouse
- Mixed Use Large Scale
- Mixed Use Medium Scale
- Mixed Use Small Scale

Each building type was addressed individually before moving onto the subsequent type. For each, three images were presented for participant consideration as to if they would be appropriate downtown. Each image was presented individually and important features to consider – such as height, modulation, materials and setback – were identified by the consultant team. After this process was repeated for each of the three images for one building type, a summary slide that included all three images was shown. The live polling feature then began, and for each of the three images discussed, asked participants:

“Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?”

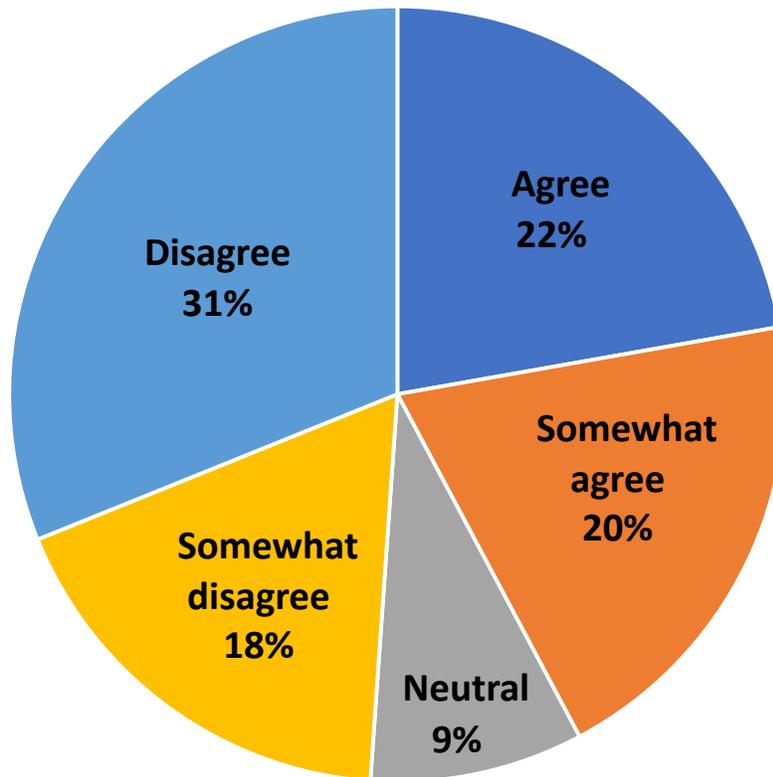
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree

Participants then marked their response for each of the three images, while the consultant reminded participants of some of the key features for each building.

This process of presenting three images by building type for consideration of their appropriateness downtown was then repeated for each of the building types listed above. The pages that follow illustrate the responses by building type. Each page includes the image, the response shown in pie chart form, a list of the key features that were noted during the workshop, and some key observations about the responses for the particular image. Key observations and analysis are also provided for each building type, following the individual pages for each building image.

APARTMENT 1

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos? (A1)



Key Features

- Buff brick module in the center, flanked by two metal clad modules
- Small patio for ground level units
- Entrance at the corner for upper level units

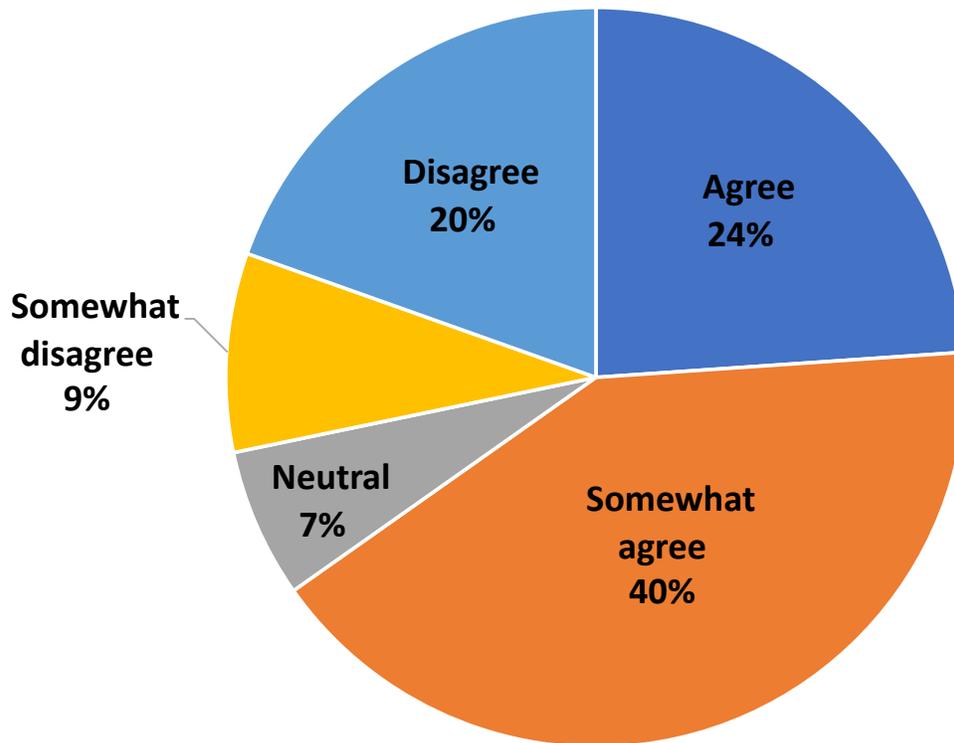
Apartment 1 Results

Participant feedback on Apartment 1 illustrates fairly divided responses. 42% of participants believe this building is appropriate to some degree downtown, while 49% of participants believe it is inappropriate to some degree. A fair number of participants also noted that they're neutral in their opinion about this particular building. Neutral opinions could indicate a participant believes the building would be appropriate in some design contexts, but not others; this response could also indicate an indifferent feeling, possibly because of a range of opinions regarding each of the key features.

Apartment 1 (A1)

APARTMENT 2

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos? (A2)



Key Features

- Red brick
- Four stories
- Shared entries
- Ground level units have small patios

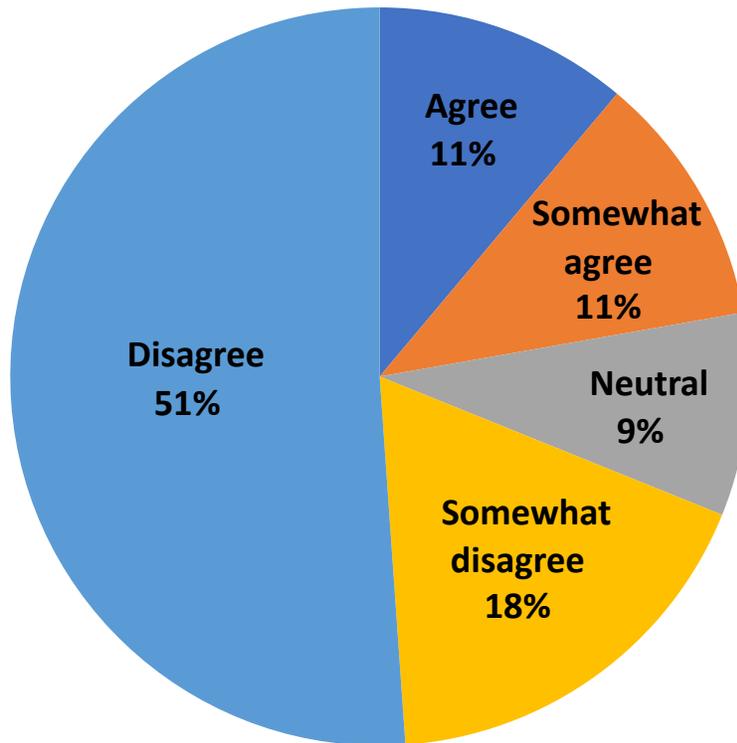
Apartment 2 Results

Responses for the second apartment building presented are much more in favor of this building. 65% of participants believe it is appropriate or somewhat appropriate downtown, and 29% of participants believe this building is some degree of inappropriate downtown. A smaller percentage of participants noted a neutral opinion for this image than A1, with only 6%.

Apartment 2 (A2)

APARTMENT 3

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(A3)



Apartment 3 (A3)

Key Features

- Small setback with landscaping
- Variation in materials
- Offsets in wall planes
- Vertically proportioned windows

Apartment 3 Results

The third and final apartment image shown during the workshop overwhelmingly received a negative response with 69% of participants indicating their opinion that this building would be some degree of inappropriate for downtown San Marcos. Only 22% of participants believe the building would be appropriate, and 9% were of a neutral opinion.

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Apartment 1 (A1)



Apartment 2 (A2)



Apartment 3 (A3)

Based on the feedback provided for each of the three apartment images, more detailed observations and analysis can be deduced. That analysis follows and is divided by building feature. Images of each apartment building are also provided for ease of reference as they will be discussed in the analysis.

Setback

Each of the three buildings shows a small setback from the sidewalk edge. However, addressing setback varies in each of the building images. On one end of the spectrum, A1 shows a fully hardscaped (man-made, hard, landscaping materials such as paths) setback, which is primarily used for private patios. A2 shows a mixed approach for the setback, with a hardscaped private patio area for each ground floor unit, with some greenery between the private patio and the sidewalk. Finally, A3 appears to incorporate a fully landscaped setback area. While the approach for setback in each image varies, the participant results do not appear to align with one approach vs. the other. **Therefore, it is safe to conclude that a small setback for apartment buildings is appropriate downtown, and some degree of landscaping is also likely appropriate. A fully hardscaped setback may be appropriate in some cases.**

Mass & Articulation

Each of the three apartment buildings shown addresses building massing and articulation in a slightly different way. A1 incorporates a step down at an entrance element, utilizes slight offsets down the length of the wall and incorporates balconies to break up the three-story mass. A2 is more traditional in its design with modules of windows alternating with balcony and entryways. This continues down the length of the façade. A2 also incorporates traditional features such as a window lintel (a horizontal support across the top of a window) and horizontally and vertically aligned windows. Finally, A3 incorporates a small stepback after the second story so that the third and fourth story are slightly recessed. Beyond that, however, few massing or articulation techniques are used to reduce the size of the building. **Based on participant feedback, apartment buildings with massing that express traditional building modules are most appropriate.**

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Apartment 1 (A1)



Apartment 2 (A2)



Apartment 3 (A3)

Building Height

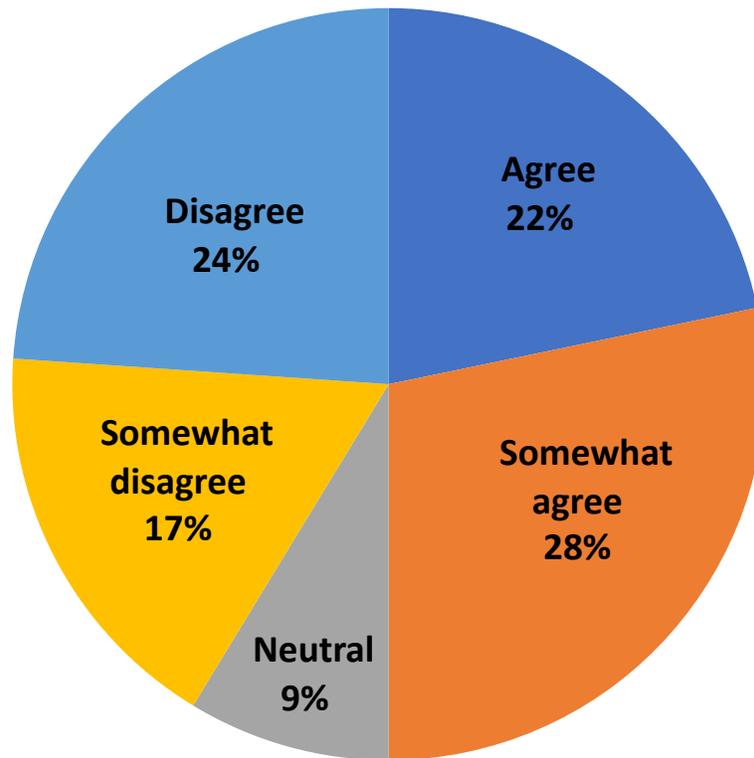
One of the apartment buildings (A1) shows a three-story building with a two-story module at a corner, while the other two show four-story buildings. However, A2 shows a four-story building with more traditional module breaks moving horizontally along a façade. While A3 also shows a four-story building and has a small stepback after the second story, which theoretically helps reduce the scale of a larger building, its lack of traditional module breaks may make it less appropriate for downtown.

Building Materials

From participant feedback, it appears as though traditional building materials are most appropriate in downtown San Marcos. A2, which is composed primarily of red brick, received the highest level of approval from those participating in the workshop. A1 still incorporates brick, although it is lighter in color, and also utilizes metal cladding as an accent material. A3, however, utilizes a wide variety of materials, which participants may have thought were applied inappropriately or thought that there was too much variation in material to be appropriate. **In general, the use of traditional masonry materials, whether brick or stone, are important based on participant feedback. It also appears that an accent material (or two) are appropriate, depending on application and location.**

TOWNHOUSE 1

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(T1)



Townhouse 1 (T1)

Key Features

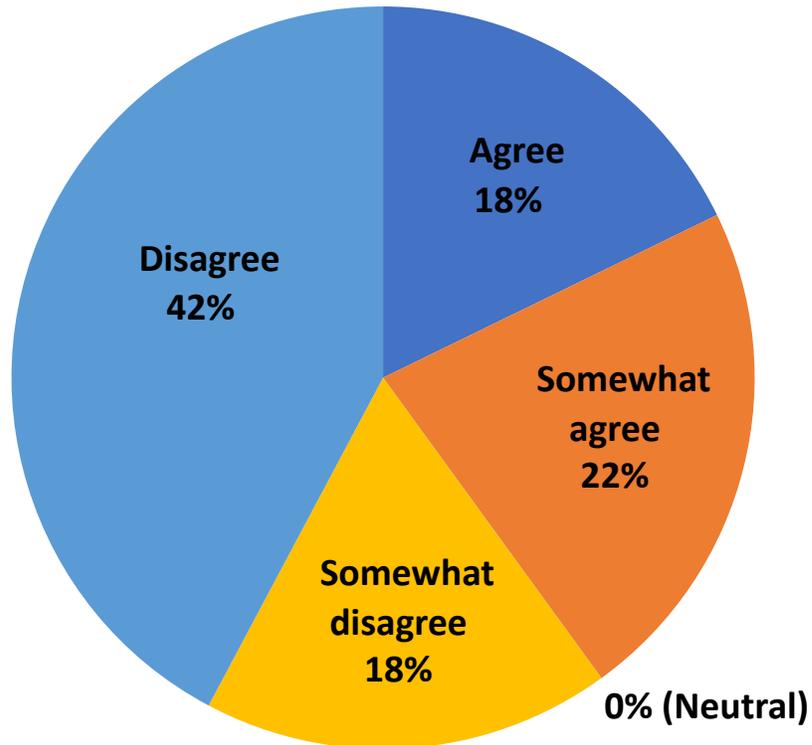
- Divided into modules
- Changes in materials
- 3 stories
- Balconies align

Townhouse 1 Results

The first townhouse received a fairly split vote with 50% of participants noting that the building is some degree of appropriate downtown. 41% of participants, however, chose an option that indicates this townhouse is inappropriate for downtown in one way or another. Finally, 9% of participants chose neutral when asked whether this townhouse is appropriate for downtown.

TOWNHOUSE 2

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(T2)



Townhouse 2 (T2)

Key Features

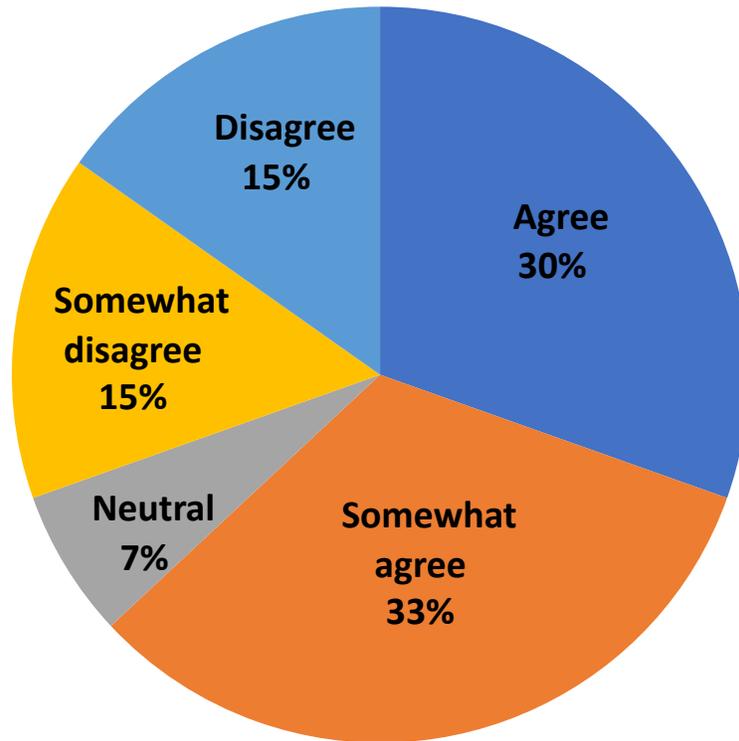
- Gable roofs
- Porches with shed roof
- Lap siding
- Vertically proportioned windows

Townhouse 2 Results

The second townhouse shown was still divisive, but all participants decided that it was appropriate or not – 0% of the participants chose neutral for this particular image. 60% of participants thought that this image is inappropriate, while only 40% of participants believed it was appropriate in some regard.

TOWNHOUSE 3

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(T3)



Townhouse 3 (T3)

Key Features

- 3 stories
- Brown brick
- Balconies at second floor
- Vertically proportioned windows, grouped in sets of 2 and 3
- Landscaping area in front

Townhouse 3 Results

The final townhouse image shown to participants received a mixed vote, like the previous two images, but it was more favorable for this image. 66% of participants believed this townhouse would be appropriate in downtown, while only 30% of participants believed it was inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate. 7% of participants selected “neutral.”

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Townhouse 1 (T1)



Townhouse 2 (T2)



Townhouse 3 (T3)

From the feedback provided for each of the images, more detail about the following building design topics can be deduced.

Setback

Each of the three townhouse images shows a small setback from the sidewalk, although the distance varies slightly for each image. The setback in each image also includes some amount of landscaping, varying from grass and low shrubs to taller trees and bushes. On one end of the spectrum, a small setback with mulch and low landscaping in the T1 image received an almost evenly split vote. T2 falls in the middle with a similar small setback, although the landscaping is much more pronounced with bushes and small trees. This photo, however, received a fairly negative response. Finally, T3 incorporates the largest setback and the tallest and densest landscaping within the setback. Unfortunately, the vote patterns are not perfectly aligned with the setback size and landscaping characteristics to deduce any concrete information about these factors. **Overall, however, it would be safe to say that some setback with some type of landscaping is appropriate downtown.**

Mass & Articulation

The massing and articulation used for each of the three townhouse images greatly differ. In T1, while the mass of the building is not substantially varied across the length of the building, the building is articulated to break up the form. Small step backs and wall projections are utilized, as are changes in material, all of which are used in modules. While this helps break up the mass, it may also be too formulaic and not accomplish the goal of fully reducing a large building mass, which could have contributed to the split vote for this image. T2 similarly does not incorporate many massing variations, although it is unique in its use of a gable roof form compared to the other two townhouse images. The use of shed roofs over the porches and the small setback for the two middle units help to articulate the façade. The final image, T3, incorporates very small wall offsets between units and the use of a portico/balcony feature for the first and second floors to break up the façade. T3 incorporates the fewest number of massing and articulation techniques to break up the façade, yet it received the highest number of appropriate votes. **Therefore, it is likely that mass and articulation had a small impact on the votes compared to some of the other features of each townhome.**

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Townhouse 1 (T1)

Building Height

Two of the three townhouse images – T1 and T3 – are designed as three-story buildings, although T3 also incorporates a small fourth story element, likely an attic space, into the roof form as a dormer. These two images both received a higher number of positive votes than T2, which was two stories. While it is impossible to fully conclude that building height is a key factor in the votes without any written comments or differentiation between building height in different design contexts, it does appear that three story townhouses may be more appropriate downtown than two-stories, depending on the location.



Townhouse 2 (T2)

Building Materials

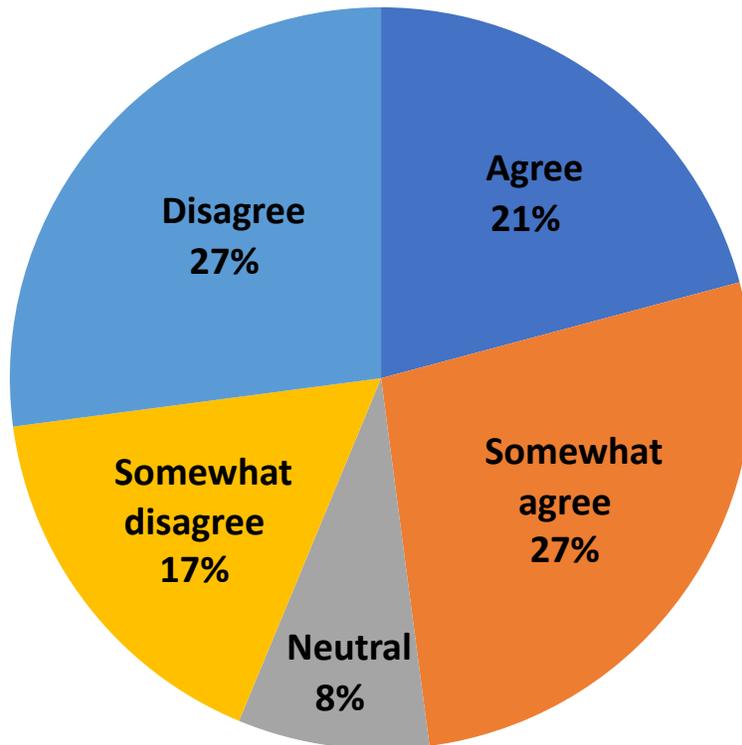
Each of the townhouses shown take a different approach in its use of building materials. T1 incorporates the largest variety of building materials, with traditional brick used as the primary building material, siding utilized for the wall projections and a detailed stucco used as an accent material. T2, on the other hand, utilizes horizontal siding as its primary, and only visible, material. Finally, T3 primarily utilizes red brick. **Based on the votes for each of these three townhouse images, it is clear that traditional building materials are favored for townhouses downtown. However, there is acceptance for the use of an accent material (or two), as long as it is subordinate to the primary material. It is also worth noting that another potential factor in the negative response to T2 is that the siding is not a neutral or natural color, which may have been viewed as inappropriate for downtown.**



Townhouse 3 (T3)

MIXED USE - LARGE SCALE 1

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(ML1)



Key Features

- 5 stories
- Variation in materials (brick, fiber cement siding and stucco)
- Expression of first two floors
- Wall offsets
- Storefronts at street level

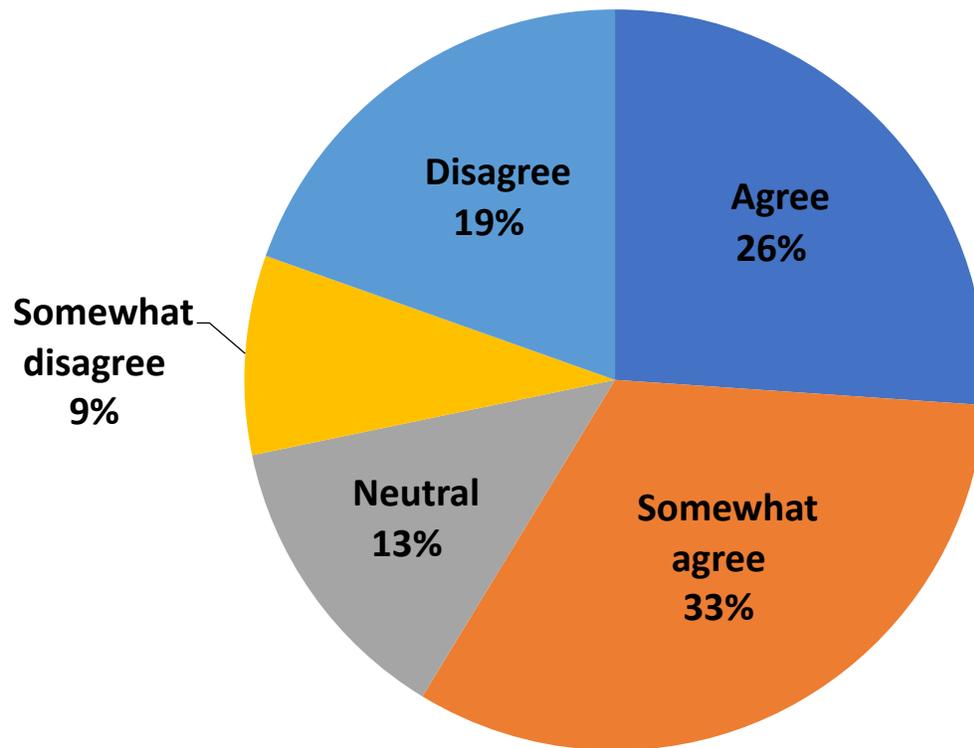
Mixed Use Large Scale 1 Results

The first Mixed Use Large Scale building shown received a fairly split vote with 48% of participants noting that the building is appropriate downtown, while 44% of participants believed it is inappropriate to some degree. 8% of participants voted neutral. This split of votes and the neutral votes likely indicates that participants may have had different opinions on whether this building would be appropriate in the Approach vs. the Residential/Transition Edge, for instance.

Mixed Use - Large Scale 1 (ML1)

MIXED USE - LARGE SCALE 2

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(ML2)



Mixed Use - Large Scale 2 (ML2)

Key Features

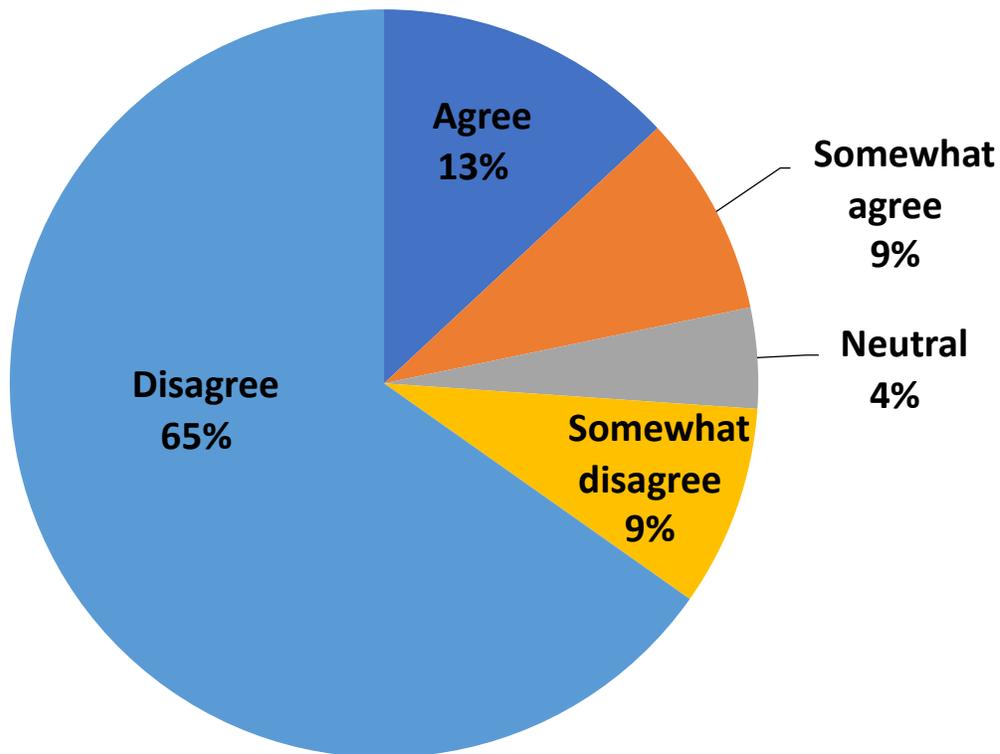
- Change in materials (brick and metal) expresses modules
- Slight wall offset is consistent with changes in wall materials
- Vertically proportioned windows, inset
- 4 stories, with fourth floor set back

Mixed Use Large Scale 2 Results

The second large scale mixed use building received just shy of two thirds appropriate votes (59%), with 28% of people stating the building is inappropriate in some way, and 13% of people voting neutral. Similar to ML1, this split in votes could indicate that the 59% of participants that voted appropriate or somewhat appropriate believe this building could be located in any of the five design contexts, while those that voted neutral or inappropriate believe this building may be suited for some of the design contexts, but not others. Their vote could also indicate that the building simply isn't appropriate for any of the design contexts.

MIXED USE - LARGE SCALE 3

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(ML3)



Key Features

- 5 stories
- Changes in materials
- Slight wall inset in middle of building
- Strong horizontal line at first floor
- Cornice caps buildings
- Synthetic stucco is primary material

Mixed Use Large Scale 3 Results

The third large scale mixed use building overwhelmingly received inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate votes, with 74% of the vote. Only 22% of participants believed this building is appropriate or somewhat appropriate, and 4% of people voted neutral for this image.

Mixed Use - Large Scale 3 (ML3)

MIXED USE LARGE SCALE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Mixed Use - Large Scale 1 (ML1)

From the feedback provided for each of the images, more detail about the following building design topics can be deduced.

Setback

Each of the three buildings shown for this mixed use large scale category display a zero lot line setback, meaning they're located at the sidewalk edge. Storefronts open directly onto the sidewalk for each of the three buildings. A zero lot line setback is common for large mixed use buildings. Since there is no differentiation in this feature of each of the three images shown, this cannot be relied upon as a determining factor in the voting for this category.



Mixed Use - Large Scale 2 (ML2)

Mass & Articulation

Each of the three mixed use large scale buildings shown for this activity utilized different massing and articulation techniques. In ML1, the majority of the building mass steps back after the second story. This second story is “capped” to give the illusion of a two-story building for this middle section, and a horizontal band along the top of the first story also provides some additional detail that alludes back to traditional design features. This is also emphasized through the use of window sills of different material and color and fixed canopies over the storefronts. Balconies throughout the building provide articulation for each floor, and the stepped back portion of three through five stories is also modulated to provide additional massing breaks. ML2 uses some similar articulation techniques including a contemporary version of the base, middle and cap design, and the use of a different material to highlight the window sills and lintels. However, the primary massing variation in this building occurs at the corner with a slight stepback for the corner element. A fourth floor is also stepped back significantly, but is difficult to see in the image. Unlike ML1 and ML2, ML3 does not incorporate massing techniques that successfully break up the scale of the building. Instead, a strong cap along the first floor emphasizes the size of the building, and a small inset in the middle of the building used on floors three through five is too small to successfully break up the building. While the building is designed with a base, middle and cap as design traditions indicate is appropriate, the lack of other massing and articulation techniques likely contributed to the high number of inappropriate votes for ML3. **The appropriate votes for ML1 and ML2, however, indicate that the massing and articulation techniques were likely viewed as appropriate and helped break up the large size of these mixed use buildings.**



Mixed Use - Large Scale 3 (ML3)

MIXED USE LARGE SCALE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use - Large Scale 1 (ML1)



Mixed Use - Large Scale 2 (ML2)



Mixed Use - Large Scale 3 (ML3)

Building Height

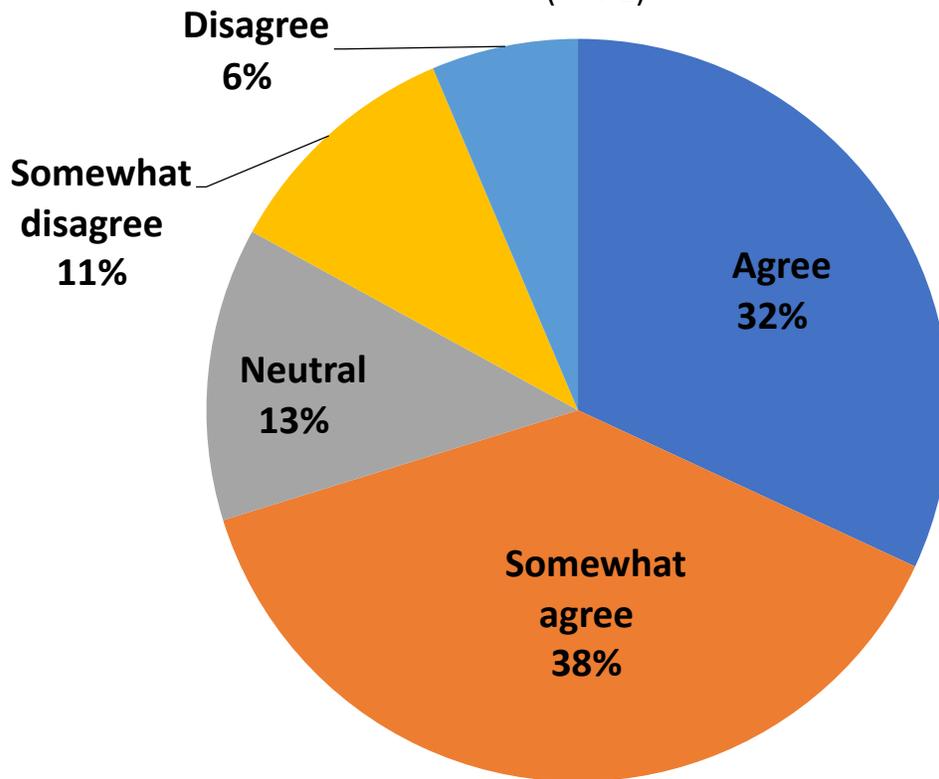
The images shown are a mix of four (ML2) and five (ML1 and ML3) stories, although at the street level, they are perceived to be between one and three stories. However, the votes for each of these building heights do not correspond with the height of the building. Therefore, it is likely that building height for Mixed Use Large Scale buildings is appropriate with two and three stories at the street. Additional stories should be stepped back from the street and the perceived scale of the building.

Building Materials

Each of the three mixed use large scale buildings takes a different approach to the building materials used and their application. ML1 utilizes primarily red brick, with some fiber cement siding and stucco as materials in the set back on the third, fourth and fifth stories in the middle of the building. A light masonry material is used for the sills of some windows to emphasize the horizontal line of the second story. Red brick is also the primary material for ML2, with metal used at the corner. Similar to ML1, the application of secondary materials corresponds to the corner module which emphasizes the massing variation and helps reduce the perceived scale of the building. While this same technique is utilized in ML3, the primary material used is synthetic stucco rather than a traditional masonry material. This could have contributed to the overwhelmingly negative response to this image.

MIXED USE -MEDIUM SCALE 1

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(MM1)



Key Features

- Red brick
- 3 stories
- Contemporary interpretation of cornice
- Canopy at street level
- Caps above windows express horizontal alignment

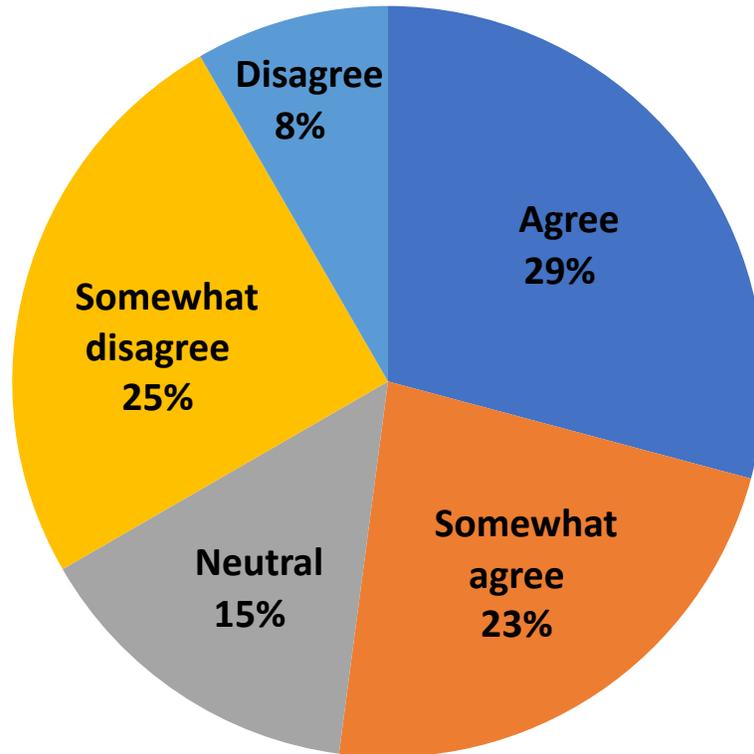
Mixed Use Medium Scale 1 Results

The first mixed use medium scale building received primarily positive responses, with 70% of participants noting it is appropriate or somewhat appropriate downtown, and only 17% of participants stating it is inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate downtown. 13% of participants selected neutral for this option.

Mixed Use - Medium Scale 1 (MM1)

MIXED USE -MEDIUM SCALE 2

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(MM2)



Key Features

- 3 stories; 3rd floor set back
- Wall offset (rear portion)
- Brick with fiber cement as accent material
- Canopies

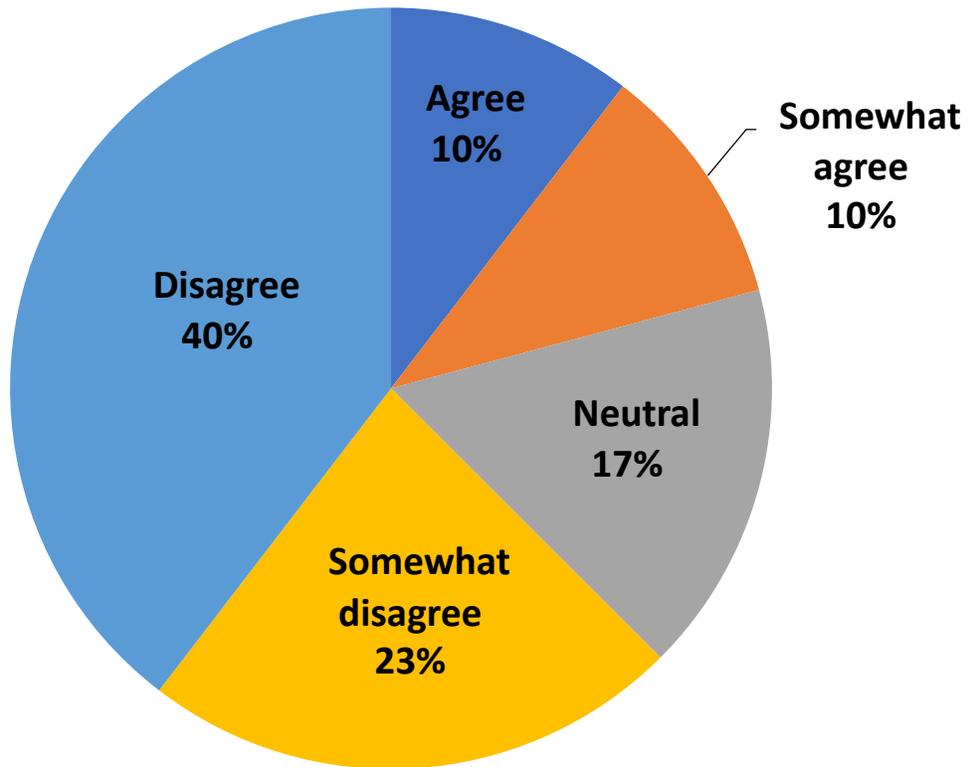
Mixed Use Medium Scale 2 Results

The second mixed use medium scale image received a more split vote, with 52% of participants selecting appropriate or somewhat appropriate, 33% selecting inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate, and 15% selecting neutral. This more split vote could indicate that participants were split on whether this building would be appropriate in different design contexts downtown, but may also be due to the approach for some of the building features.

Mixed Use - Medium Scale 2 (MM2)

MIXED USE -MEDIUM SCALE 3

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(MM3)



Key Features

- Gable roof forms
- 3 stories
- Changes in materials reflect different modules
- Storefronts at street level
- Brick is primary material, with some stucco (detailed)

Mixed Use Medium Scale 3 Results

The final mixed use medium scale building received more negative responses than the previous two building images. While 20% of people believed this building would be appropriate or somewhat appropriate downtown, 17% were neutral in their opinion of this building, and 63% believed it would be inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate downtown. This large percentage of neutral opinions could indicate differing opinions of appropriateness based on the design context; however, the large percentage of inappropriate votes indicates key features may be inappropriate for San Marcos' downtown.

Mixed Use - Medium Scale 3 (MM3)

MIXED USE MEDIUM SCALE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Mixed Use - Medium Scale 1 (MM1)



Mixed Use - Medium Scale 2 (MM2)



Mixed Use - Medium Scale 3 (MM3)

From the feedback provided for each of the images, more detail about the following building design topics can be deduced.

Setback

MM1 is located at the sidewalk edge. Because of this, there is no room for landscaping, however planter boxes are still used to separate the outdoor dining space from the sidewalk in this case. A similar approach is used in MM2, except that bollards replace planter boxes to separate the building from the public realm. In the third image for this building category, the building is located along the sidewalk, but in this case, the sidewalk is detached from the street.

Instead, a large grassy area separates the street from the sidewalk and building.

If considering only the setback of the three MM building images, one could conclude that providing a large landscaped area between the street and sidewalk is inappropriate downtown.

Mass & Articulation

The medium scale mixed use buildings in the workshop incorporated a range of massing and articulation techniques, and the responses appear to reflect some of the methods used. In MM1, a vertical offset is used for the full height of the building, allowing space for outdoor seating in the front of the building. While a base, middle, and cap design is not fully incorporated, a contemporary interpretation of a cap is utilized and other traditional design features, including a lintel and fixed canopy, are utilized. MM2 also incorporates contemporary versions of some traditional design features including a fixed canopy and a storefront with large glass windows. MM2 also shows a building that is two stories at the street and that steps back to a building module that is a full three stories. While larger, this module still utilizes articulation techniques such as using balconies to break up the building mass. Both modules of the building also incorporate a cap-like feature with a change in material. Finally, MM3 shows a building that is articulated primarily through its material changes, which are applied to the different modules moving horizontally down the building. No techniques are applied to break up the overall building mass. This building also utilizes a gable roof form, whereas the previous two utilized a flat roof, which is more traditional. It is likely that this lack of breaking the building mass into more human-scaled modules and utilizing the gable roof form contributed to the negative response to this image.

MIXED USE MEDIUM SCALE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use - Medium Scale 1 (MM1)



Mixed Use - Medium Scale 2 (MM2)



Mixed Use - Medium Scale 3 (MM3)

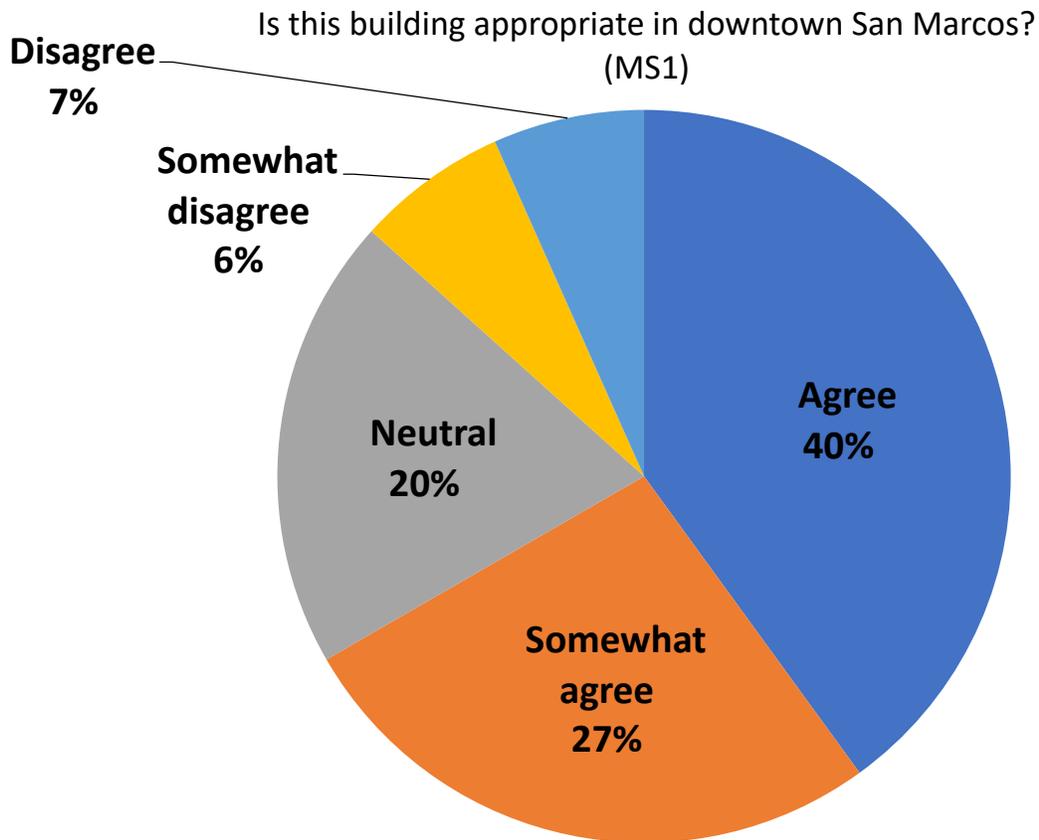
Building Height

All three of the mixed use medium scale buildings are three stories in height, although MM2 incorporates a section of the building that is two stories. **Since responses to MM1 and MM2 are primarily positive or split, but leaning positive, it can be concluded that two or three stories at the street edge are preferred.**

Building Materials

Buildings MM1 and MM2 utilize red brick as the primary building material. While MM2 has a larger presence of accent material at the cap (fiber cement), it still reads as a primarily brick building. While MM3 utilizes red brick as one of its primary building material, bright detailed stucco also has a larger presence in this building design. The application of the stucco superficially follows what could be interpreted as building modules, but are not offset or stepped back enough to be considered true building modules. It is likely that this application of materials, and the use of a bright non-traditional material, contributed to the negative reaction MM3 received.

MIXED USE -SMALL SCALE 1



Mixed Use - Small Scale 1 (MS1)

Key Features

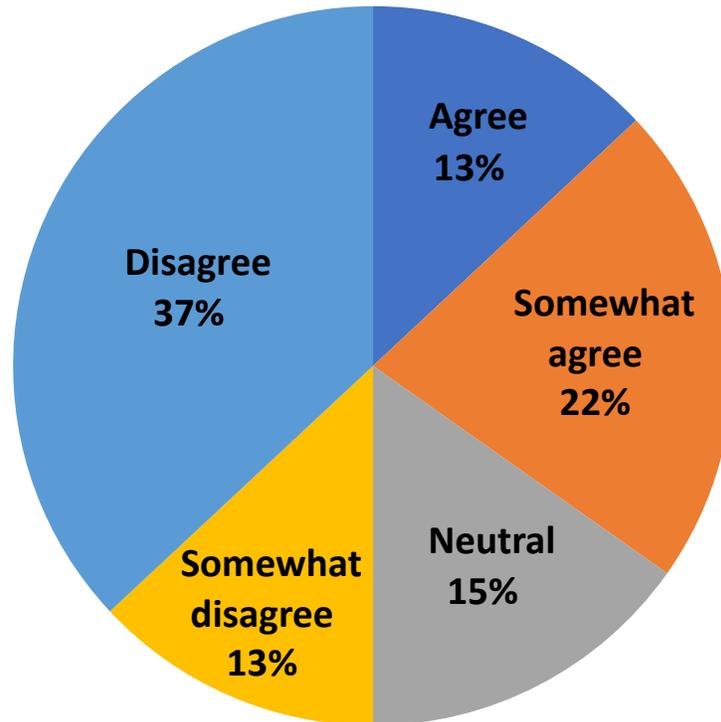
- Divided into modules
- Notches identify upper floor entries
- Third floor stepback
- Horizontal band at first floor level

Mixed Use Small Scale 1 Results

Responses to MS1 were primarily positive, with 67% of participants responding that this building would be appropriate or somewhat appropriate downtown. 20% of participants had a neutral opinion of this building, which is the largest neutral opinion for any of the buildings shown during this activity. This could mean that these participants believed this building would be appropriate in some design contexts but not others. Finally, only 13% of participants believed this building was inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate.

MIXED USE -SMALL SCALE 2

Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
(MS2)



Key Features

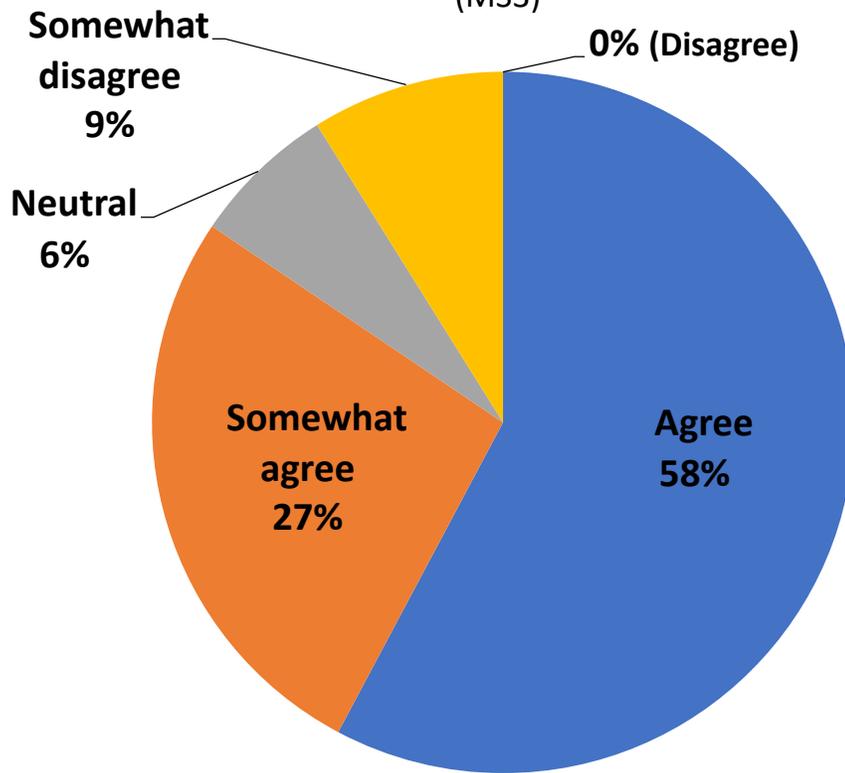
- 3 stories
- More contemporary
- Does have a cap
- Metal cladding, in small panels

Mixed Use Small Scale 2 Results

Responses to MS2 indicate that overall, this building is inappropriate for downtown as 50% voted “somewhat disagree” or “disagree.” 15% of responses were for the neutral category, which, like in MS1, could indicate that this building may be appropriate in some downtown locations but not others. Finally, only 25% of participants believed this building would be appropriate downtown.

Mixed Use - Small Scale 2 (MS2)

MIXED USE -SMALL SCALE 3
 Is this building appropriate in downtown San Marcos?
 (MS3)



Key Features

- Modest wall offsets
- Stepped cornice
- Brick
- Stone kickplates
- Awning & canopies

Mixed Use Small Scale 3 Results

The final photo shown for this activity received the largest positive response with 85% of participants stating this building would be appropriate or somewhat appropriate downtown. 6% of participants selected neutral for this question, and 9% of participants selected “somewhat agree” when considering whether this building is appropriate downtown. This question received no “disagree” responses, which is the only photo to not receive any disagree responses in the activity.

Mixed Use - Small Scale 3 (MS3)

MIXED USE SMALL SCALE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Mixed Use - Small Scale 1 (MS1)

From the feedback provided for each of the images, more detail about the following building design topics can be deduced.

Setback

Each of these mixed use small scale buildings are located directly on the sidewalk edge, with no landscaping separating the building from the sidewalk. The entryway for each building opens directly onto the sidewalk. **It can be concluded, therefore, that setback was not a determining factor in the responses as the setback is all the same but the responses to each image vary.**



Mixed Use - Small Scale 2 (MS2)

Mass & Articulation

The massing and articulation techniques used for each of the three small scale mixed use buildings vary, and provide potential insight into participant responses. The design of MS1 incorporates traditional building modules, with a recess after a determined width that highlights an entryway. A horizontal band also emphasizes the first floor and a cap to the second story defines the primary building mass. A small third story is stepped back and a lighter building material is used for the third story to visually recess this part of the mass. Traditional storefront features, including a kickplate and large storefront windows, are also incorporated in a contemporary way in MS1. MS2, however, provides a very contemporary approach to a downtown building. While the ground floor incorporates large areas of glass, as do traditional storefronts, the features of a traditional storefront are not included. Similarly, the building is “capped” through the use of an overhanging, almost cantilevered, flat roof form, but the building is not designed with a base, middle and cap in its overall design. While windows align in this image, a lack of massing and articulation techniques to break up the massing and to provide visual modules may contribute to the participant response. Finally, MS3 incorporates traditional building design features including a storefront (with a kickplate, large glass area, and fixed awning), as well as a recessed entry and a cap at the top of the building. A horizontal band is also incorporated, as are lintels above each second story window. The overall building mass steps back slightly as the building continues down the street, which breaks up the overall mass. **These traditional design features that divide the massing as well as the details that reflect traditional building design are key to creating an compatible building design downtown. This is reflected through the overwhelmingly positive response to MS3 and MS1, and the negative/unsure response to MS2.**



Mixed Use - Small Scale 3 (MS3)

MIXED USE SMALL SCALE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use - Small Scale 1 (MS1)

Building Height

The buildings shown in this section are between two and three stories. MS3 consists of two stories; MS1 of two stories and a partial third story; and MS2 of three stories. While the participant responses do correspond to this order, moving from positive to negative/unsure as the height increases, the previous mixed use scale (particularly medium scale) show that three stories is seen as appropriate in other cases. **Therefore, it is safe to conclude that other building design features are likely responsible for the responses to the three MS buildings, and that two, two and a half, and three story buildings are appropriate downtown.**



Mixed Use - Small Scale 2 (MS2)

Building Materials

In two of the three MS images (MS1 and MS3), brick is used as the primary material. MS1 also incorporates some metal as an accent material for the horizontal band and cap, and an accent material for the third story, but the red brick is the primary material that can be seen. Masonry is used as an accent material in MS3 for the kickplate and window lintels. **These two images, which received higher positive reviews, incorporate traditional materials, which are important downtown.** MS2, however, incorporated a more contemporary metal cladding material divided into small panels. While the votes do not indicate why people thought the building was inappropriate, the material could be part of this reason as it is not traditional in its scale or finish.



Mixed Use - Small Scale 3 (MS3)

ACTIVITY 2: VISION STATEMENTS

After the completion of the virtual workshops, participants received a link to an online survey created using SurveyMonkey Google Forms to provide feedback on draft vision statements for each of the design contexts. An introduction to this activity was presented during the workshop, which included a map of each design context, a few buildings and projects in the context to remind people of current development, a series of key characteristics, and the proposed vision statement. A link to the maps and images was included in the survey if participants wanted to review them again while responding to the vision statements. The materials that were shown are also included in the pages that follow.

Sensitive Edges

The presentation and introduction to this activity also discussed the importance of identifying sensitive edges to the design contexts. For example, borders along the Residential/Transition edge and along either side of the Approach design context that connect downtown to the adjacent residential neighborhoods are identified as Sensitive Residential edges. This means that development near the low density residential neighborhoods should be lower in scale and more closely reflect traditional design forms as seen in the neighborhoods. Incorporating compatible roof forms, deeper setbacks and landscaped front areas that reflect traditional neighborhoods are appropriate strategies for these sensitive edges. A Parks and Open Space sensitive edge was also identified along the eastern side of two design contexts. For these areas, stepping new development down in scale moving towards the parks and open space areas and ensuring street frontages encourage pedestrian activity so access to the green spaces is easy and comfortable is important. Views may also be important to consider when designing new buildings near these sensitive edges.

Survey Overview

In the online survey, participants reviewed and responded to the vision statement for each design context in two segments. This allowed participants to potentially agree with one part of the vision statement but disagree with the other, and to provide more specific comments and suggested edits to the two halves of the draft statement. While a couple respondents provided specific text change suggestions, the majority of comments focused on major themes and topics that should be incorporated into or strengthened in the vision statements. The sections that follow present the results from the online vision statement activity.

Key Characteristics of the draft Vision Statement for the Residential Transition Edge:

- **Scale:** Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.
- **Building massing:** Buildings vary in their massing, to express traditional residential forms and smaller commercial buildings.
- **Street level character:** Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have porches and courtyards that connect to the street.
- **Frontages and setbacks:** Setbacks vary, with some buildings close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.
- **Parking:** Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

Draft Vision Statement: "The Residential/Transition Edge Context houses a mix of uses, including retail, offices and townhomes, in designs that create a transition from the more intensive development of the Downtown Core to the lower density residential neighborhoods that lie to the west. Buildings draw upon both traditional residential and commercial types in their forms, materials and relationship to the street. Some are built close to the street edge while others are set back with front lawns. Along the sensitive edges of abutting residential districts, buildings are designed to minimize negative impacts, with reduced height, increased setbacks and landscaping."

Do you agree or disagree with the first part of the vision statement? "The Residential/Transition Edge Context houses a mix of uses, including retail, offices and townhomes, in designs that create a transition from the more intensive development of the Downtown Core to the lower density residential neighborhoods that lie to the west."*

Agree

Disagree (see below)

Sample page from the online Google survey

If you selected "Disagree" above, or have additional comments, what modifications do you suggest be made to the vision statement to better meet the community's vision?

Your answer

Do you agree or disagree with the second part of the vision statement?
"Buildings draw upon both traditional residential and commercial types in their forms, materials and relationship to the street. Some are built close to the street edge while others are set back with front lawns. Along the sensitive edges of abutting residential districts, buildings are design to minimize negative impacts, with reduced height, increased setbacks and landscaping." *

Agree

Disagree (see below)

If you selected "Disagree" above, or have additional comments, what modifications do you suggest be made to the vision statement to better meet the community's vision?

Your answer

Page 4 of 6

[Back](#) [Next](#)

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Google Forms

Sample page from the online Google survey

Activity 2 Participants

Since this activity was conducted separately from the live polling activities during the virtual workshop, a few introductory questions were asked. A total of 32 people responded to this survey.

Did you participate in the virtual community workshop on July 23?

Yes: 29 participants

No: 3 participants

Are you a:

- San Marcos resident: 22
- San Marcos business owner: 4
- Architect: 0
- Developer: 0
- Texas State student: 0
- Prefer not to specify: 0
- Other OR more than one of the above: 6

In a given month (with 30 days in a month), approximately how many days do you visit downtown San Marcos?

- 0-5 days: 10
- 6-10 days: 6
- 11-15 days: 3
- 16-20 days: 3
- 21-25 days: 5
- 26-30 days: 5

Which best describes you?

- I work in downtown: 3
- I own/operate a business downtown: 4
- I own property downtown: 2
- I live downtown: 1
- I shop, visit or play downtown: 21
- None of the above: 1

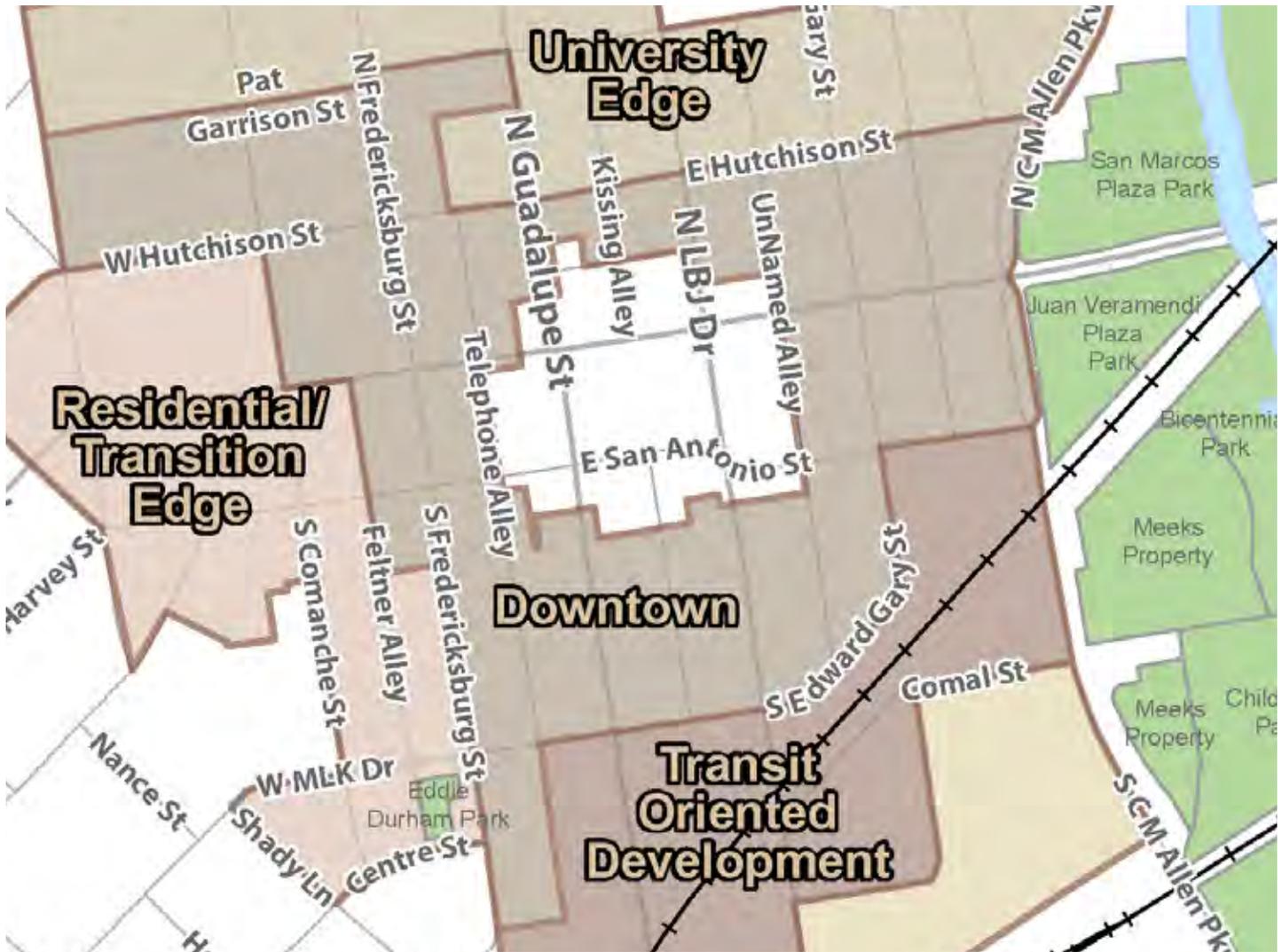
Activity 2 Overall Comments

In addition to the design context-specific comments, a series of design topics and general thoughts appeared throughout the comments:

- **Authenticity.** Applying a formulaic code to a historic downtown is inappropriate.
- **Flexibility.** While standards and guidelines are needed for the downtown, flexibility should also be part of the plan. This importance is exacerbated by the pandemic and the ever-changing ways in which we shop, work and live, and it will be vital for the San Marcos downtown to adapt accordingly.
- **Boundaries.** Re-examining the design context boundaries and naming for each of the contexts, especially the “Residential/Transition Edge” and “Downtown” is important moving forward.
- **Parking.** Examining the approach to parking downtown was mentioned by many people, who are concerned that compatibility with historic buildings will be difficult to achieve with high parking requirements. Many participants are in favor of significantly reducing or eliminating parking requirements in downtown San Marcos, and emphasizing shared, unbundled, managed and paid parking options.
- **Public Transportation.** Another transportation topic that was mentioned throughout the comments was the importance of improving public transportation systems to help people move to and through downtown. Participants mentioned the importance of this topic especially for access to the University so that cars are not so heavily relied upon.
- **Culture.** The unique culture and design of San Marcos is something that should be emphasized more in each of the design contexts. Participants noted the importance of the community’s Hispanic heritage, which is not emphasized enough through the architecture.
- **Greenery.** While this project primarily focuses on the built environment, participants noted the need for green spaces throughout downtown San Marcos. These spaces should be designed for pedestrians to enjoy as well as using them as connections and transitions between design contexts and between the downtown and adjacent areas.

Some of these topics appear more specifically in each of the design contexts as well.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONTEXT



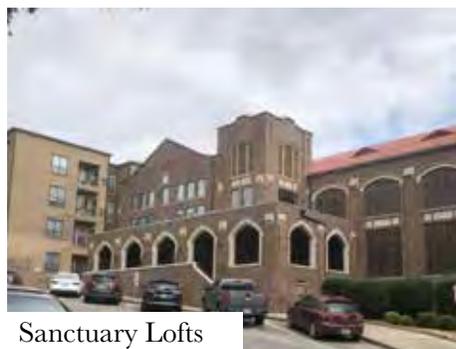
Aquabrew



Frost Bank



Craffthouse



Sanctuary Lofts



The Local

Downtown Design Context

Proposed Vision Statement

“The Downtown frames the Courthouse Square historic district and draws closely upon its design traditions to establish a sense of visual continuity between the two areas. New buildings express a scale at the street frontage that appears similar to that of buildings in the historic district.

Variations in the articulation of building fronts and in overall massing reflect the scale of the historic district, with expression elements that define traditional building widths and building heights that step down to traditional heights for portions of larger buildings.”

Key Characteristics of the Downtown Design Context/Vision Statement

- **Scale:** Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.
- **Building massing:** Buildings vary in their massing, to express modules similar in form to those seen historically.
- **Street level character:** Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility.
- **Frontages and setbacks:** A high percentage of each building front aligns at the sidewalk edge, however with some variation in setbacks for active outdoor spaces.
- **Parking:** Parking is accessed from alleys and is concealed from the street, in tuck-under designs or structures.

Community Feedback on the Vision for the Downtown Design Context:

The majority of participants agreed with the draft vision statement for the Downtown design context, although more participants agreed with the first part of the vision statement than the second part. While 25 people agreed with the first part, only 23 of the 32 participants agreed with the second part. Despite the difference in number of those in agreement with each part of the draft vision statement, a series of common themes and thoughts were reflected in the comments and revisions provided:

- **Replicating historic styles:** Participants noted that while compatibility in the Downtown design context is crucial, replicating historic styles exactly is inappropriate.
- **Compatibility:** Rhythm and scale that reflects that of historic buildings in the district is important.
- **Sense of place:** New buildings should reflect the style, character, history and culture of San Marcos. They should not be designs that would be appropriate for anywhere in Texas or anywhere in the country.
- **Pedestrian friendly:** Downtown should emphasize pedestrian friendly building design utilizing wide sidewalks and shade trees.
- **Scale:** Buildings in the Downtown Design Context should not exceed a scale of more than three stories. For buildings that must go taller to meet density requirements or be financially feasible, stepping back the upper stories should be required. This will help maintain the human scale throughout the Downtown Design Context.
- **Parking:** participants recognized that historic buildings did not need to meet parking requirements as new buildings do today, but in order to design buildings that are compatible with the existing built environment, parking requirements need to be examined. For those that provided comments, significantly reducing or eliminating parking requirements was favored.

UNIVERSITY EDGE DESIGN CONTEXT



Vista Apartments



Louie's



Old Post Office



Concho Commons

University Edge Design Context

Proposed Vision Statement

“The University Edge context creates a pedestrian-friendly connection between campus and the Downtown Context. New buildings may be larger in scale here, in keeping with campus scale, while drawing upon downtown’s design traditions.

Of special note are key public views, both north to campus and south to the Courthouse Square. New development should preserve and enhance these views by varying building massing and creating outdoor spaces that permit views through to key landmarks.”

Key Characteristics

- **Scale:** Larger buildings here can be compatible with the scale of the university.
- **Building massing:** Buildings vary in their massing, to express modules similar in form to those seen historically.
- **Street level character:** Building fronts are visually interesting with a combination of storefronts, display cases, and wall art that provides a sense of scale and activity.
- **Frontages and setbacks:** A high percentage of each building front aligns at the sidewalk edge, however with some variation in setbacks for active outdoor spaces.
- **Parking:** Parking is accessed from alleys and is concealed from the street, in tuck-under designs or structures.

Community Feedback on the Vision for the University Edge Design Context:

The majority of participants also agreed with the University Edge Design Context draft vision statement, with 26 agreeing and 6 disagreeing for both the first and second half of the statement. Common feedback included:

- **Scale:** While there was some disagreement on the appropriate scale for this context, participants did note this as an important topic. While some participants believe this is a place to implement a height minimum of three stories, others believe a lower scale is more appropriate. Despite these differing opinions, respondents did recognize that the University Edge design context should be a transition in scale from downtown to the university, where buildings that are moderately larger than those in the Downtown design context are appropriate.
- **View corridors:** While some participants commented on the importance of this topic when considering new design, others noted that this has not been a priority to the university in years past and other topics such as sustainability and affordability benefits of increased density near campus receive priority over views. Placing an emphasis on view corridors for new development needs to be examined further for this design context.
- **Street Level Activation:** While street level activation in the University Edge design context is valued, participants expressed the need to focus more on stoops and forecourts than storefronts and display cases for this context.

RESIDENTIAL/TRANSITION EDGE DESIGN CONTEXT



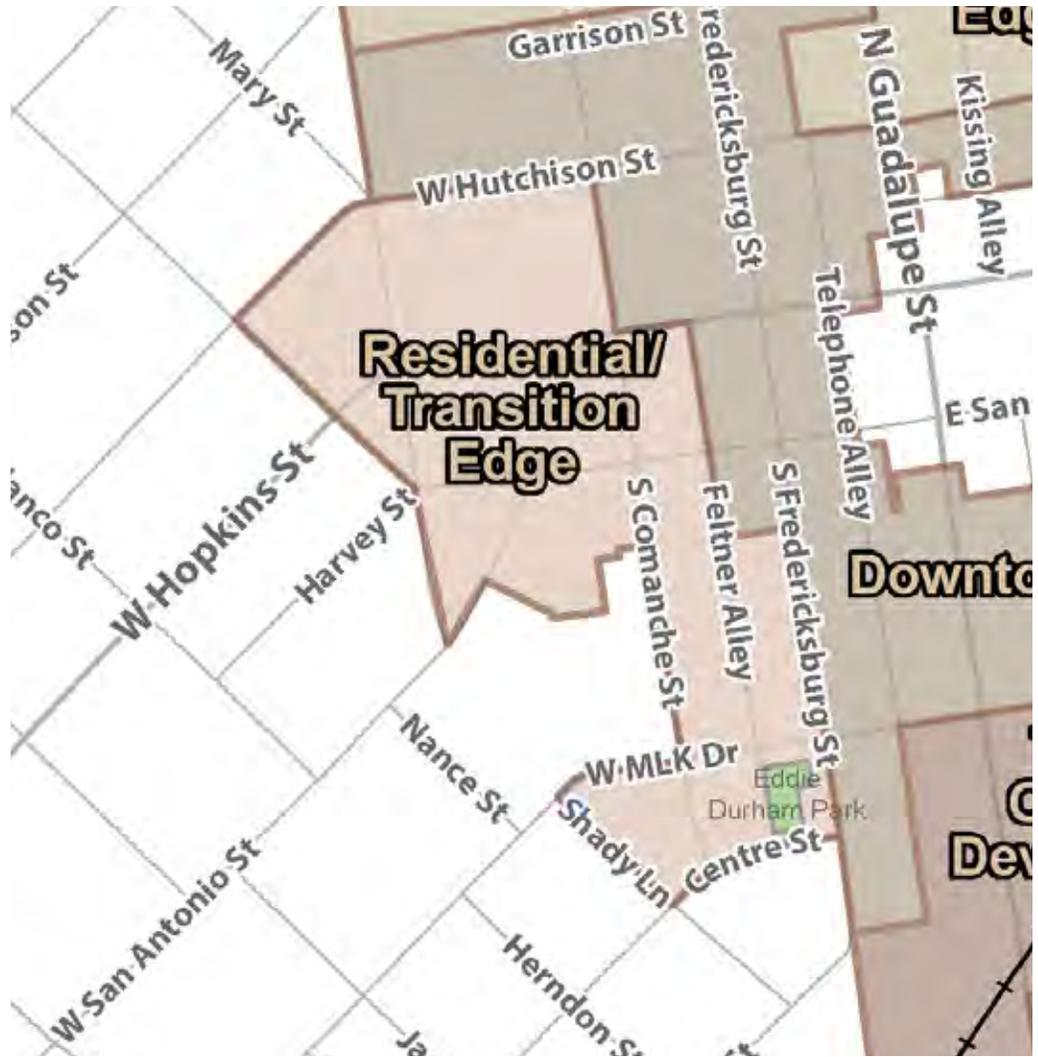
Bower Bird



Duplex residential



Corridor Business Center



Gumby's



Zelick's



North Street

Residential/Transition Edge Design Context

Proposed Vision Statement

“The Residential/Transition Edge Context houses a mix of uses, including retail, offices and townhomes, in designs that create a transition from the more intensive development of the downtown to the lower density residential neighborhoods that lie to the west.

Buildings draw upon both traditional residential and commercial types in their forms, materials and relationship to the street. Some are built close to the street edge while others are set back with front lawns. Along the sensitive edges of abutting residential districts, buildings are designed to minimize negative impacts, with reduced height, increased setbacks and landscaping.”

Key Characteristics

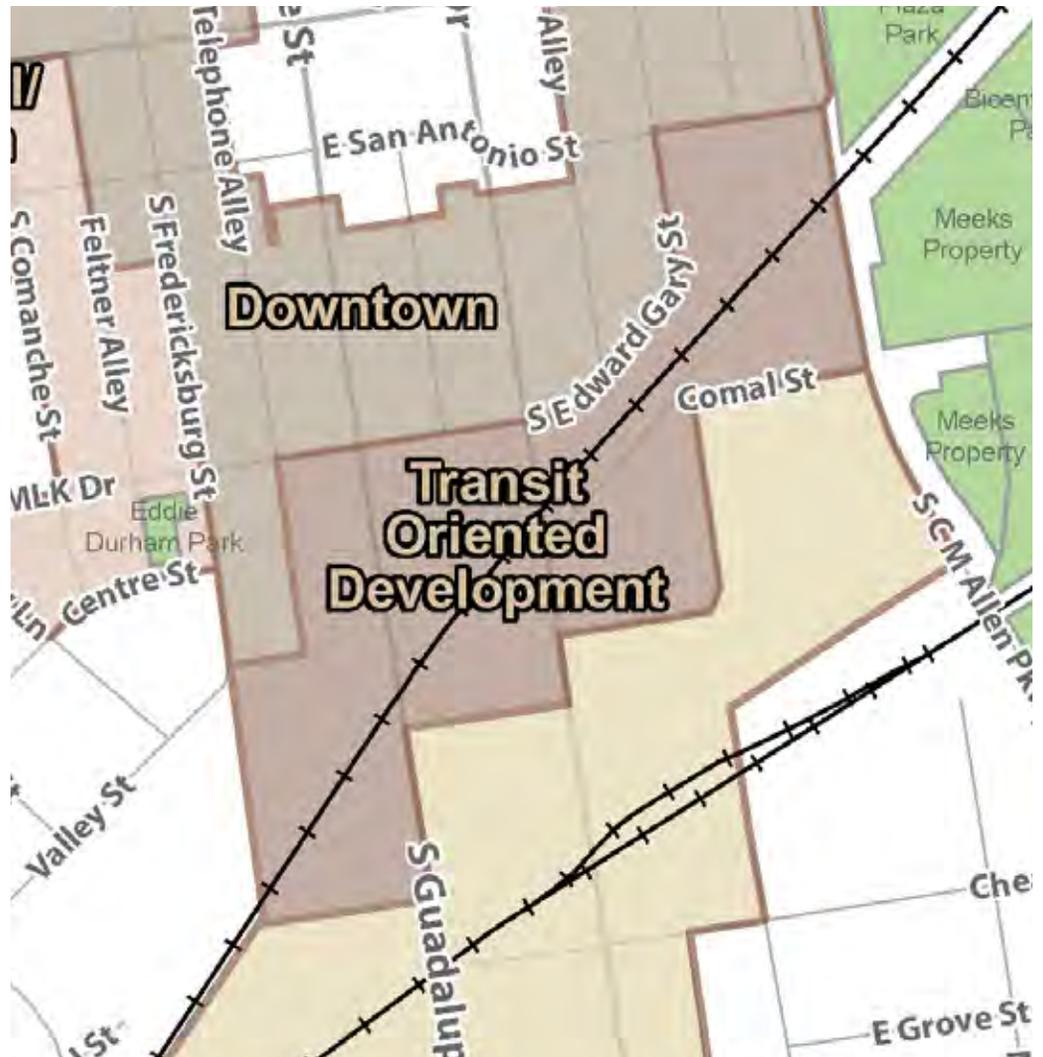
- **Scale:** Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.
- **Building massing:** Buildings vary in their massing, to express traditional residential forms and smaller commercial buildings.
- **Street level character:** Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have porches and courtyards that connect to the street.
- **Frontages and setbacks:** Setbacks vary, with some buildings close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.
- **Parking:** Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

Community Feedback on the Vision for the Residential/Transition Edge Design Context:

While 26 of the 32 survey respondents agreed with the first half of the draft vision statement for the Residential/Transition Edge, only 23 of the participants agreed with the second half. Feedback included:

- **Notes about the uses:** Comments on the first part of the vision statement focused heavily on the uses described.
 - o Participants suggested that in the list of uses provided at the beginning of the draft vision statement, cultural centers and nearby churches should also be noted as they are of importance to this design context.
 - o A participant suggested removing the term “residential” from the name of this district and from the vision statement as residential will be located throughout all of downtown.
 - o While mixed use buildings are part of this design context, participants noted that there’s already unused retail and this design context should not be focused on shopping, but on living.
- **Building setbacks:** In the second part of the vision statement, participants noted that it is often the character of this design context for buildings to be set back from the street and have green space in the front. Building right at the street edge, especially if it is a large building, is not desired for this design context. However, some people noted that while the setback is appropriate, a courtyard or forecourt is a better response to the dry environment in San Marcos.
- **Scale:** Buildings in this design context should be small in scale to better fit within the neighborhood.

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) DESIGN CONTEXT



Industry



View on the Square

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Design Context

Proposed Vision Statement

“The TOD context accommodates a mix of uses, with an emphasis upon housing that focuses on potential transit access. Higher intensity development can be compatible with this context, while still drawing upon downtown’s design traditions, but in more abstract ways than in the core.

The eastern portion can accommodate more intensive development. Throughout the area, projects should have a strong pedestrian orientation. The street front character is especially important here to encourage pedestrian activity.”

Key Characteristics

- **Scale:** Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.
- **Building massing:** Buildings vary in their massing to express modules similar in form to those seen historically.
- **Street level character:** Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have plazas and courtyards that connect to the street.
- **Frontages and setbacks:** Setbacks vary, with some buildings close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.
- **Parking:** Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

Community Feedback on the Vision for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Design Context:

The majority of participants also agreed with the draft vision statement for the TOD context, with 23 agreeing with the first part and 25 agreeing with the second half. Common feedback included:

- **Honoring the culture and heritage of the surrounding neighborhoods** is important in the TOD design context.
- **Scale:** Buildings should be appropriately designed to ensure that they do not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhoods, many of which include residents that have lived in San Marcos for generations. The term “higher intensity development” is questioned by many of the respondents, who are concerned that it would create a separation between many of the neighborhoods and the TOD design context. Instead, comments emphasized the need to ensure new buildings are designed with a human scale in mind, and that four stories is plenty for this context.
- **Mass and Articulation:** Comments noted that the photos of new development shown in this design context are too boxy and should be more appropriately broken into modules and articulated to create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians.
- **Green space:** Many participants noted that the second half of the vision statement should incorporate more information about greenways, bio-diverse landscaping and parks that can be used to help transition to the area outside of the design context as well as the adjacent design contexts.
- **“More intensive development”:** Some participants were concerned with this phrase in the vision statement, noting that more intensive development near established, low-scale neighborhoods may not be compatible.

APPROACH DESIGN CONTEXT



Cheatham Street Flats



Advanced Auto Parts



LBJ Apartments



Approach Design Context

Proposed Vision Statement

“The Downtown Approach context is the corridor between the highway and Downtown, providing an entry procession into the heart of Downtown. Development focuses along Guadalupe and LBJ Streets with a mix of commercial and residential uses. Design should convey a preview of the character of downtown while also drawing upon the distinct features of this area.

New, larger development is scaled to be compatible with older established buildings that remain. The context is framed with lower density residential districts along the eastern and western edges. In these areas, projects are design to provide compatible transitions to these neighborhoods with reduced massing, increased setbacks and landscaping.”

Key Characteristics

- **Scale:** Buildings express heights between two and three floors at the street edge. Upper floors are set back from the front.
- **Building massing:** Buildings vary in their massing, to express traditional residential forms and smaller commercial buildings.
- **Street level character:** Building fronts convey active uses inside (including storefronts and offices) with a high degree of visibility. Others have plazas and courtyards that connect to the street.
- **Frontages and setbacks:** Setbacks vary, with some buildings set close to the street, while others are set back with lawns and courtyards in front.
- **Parking:** Parking is located in the rear or in tuck-under designs.

Community Feedback on the Vision for the Approach Design Concept

In the final vision statement for the Approach, 26 out of the 32 respondents agreed with the first and second halves of the statement. Feedback included:

- **“Distinct features of this area”:** Multiple comments for this design context mentioned the importance of clarifying this phrase to acknowledge the existence of culturally significant sites in this area including the Cheatham Street Warehouse, the site of the old train depot, and the El Central Cultural. These places should be emphasized and not overshadowed in new development. It should also be clarified that this phrase does not refer to the newer auto-supply shops, for instance.
- **Scale:** For the Approach, many participants noted the need for smaller scale building options, ideally those that are two to four stories to be more compatible with the neighborhoods. However, some participants did mention that the larger, more contemporary buildings may be more appropriate along LBJ and Guadalupe.
- **Transition:** Comments focused on the importance of providing a stepdown closer to the neighborhoods in order to respect the historically residential areas to the east and west of this design context.
- **Honoring culture and history:** Participants noted that this area is historically one of Hispanic heritage, which should be honored in new design. One participant suggested developing a corridor from I-35 to the Courthouse with more Spanish-style architecture to make a clearer statement to visitors as they enter the community.
- **Outdoor space:** Participants also expressed the need for more courtyards and greenspace throughout the Approach, especially if emphasizing Spanish-style architecture in new development, which incorporates outdoor spaces as a key component.

DESIGN CONTEXT MAP



ACTIVITY 3: CONSIDERING BUILDING MODELS IN EACH DESIGN CONTEXT

The second live workshop activity, and third activity in the official activity order, aimed to collect information from participants about whether a building model was appropriate in each design context. For each building model shown, this activity asked:

“In which design context would this model be appropriate?”

- Downtown
- University Edge
- Residential/Transition Edge
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Approach
- All of the above
- None of the above

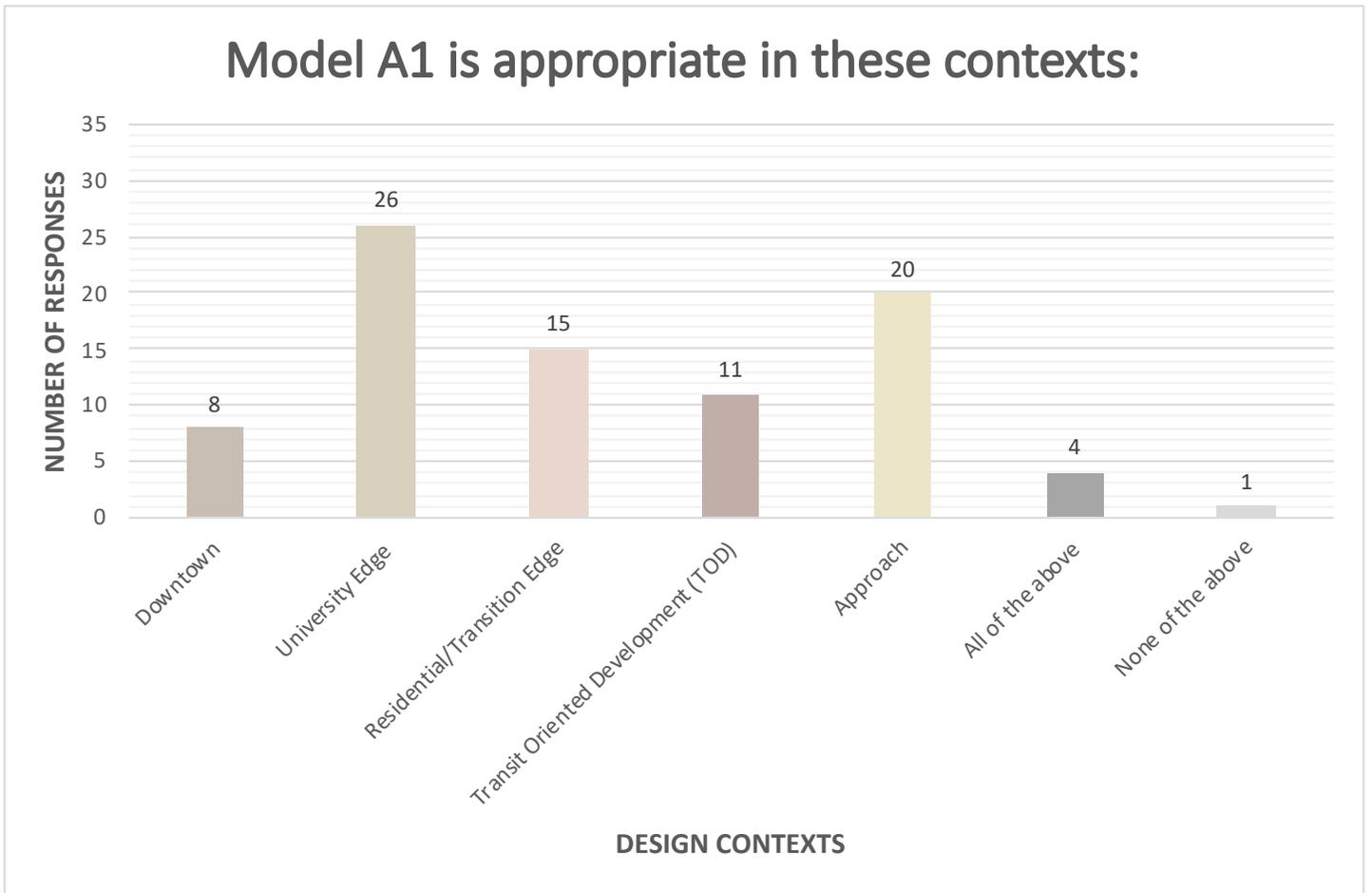
Similar to Activity 1, the building types addressed were apartments, townhouses and mixed use buildings, and between three and ten models were presented for each building type. However in this activity, each building model was presented and a short description about the key features of the building were provided before the live poll was activated. For these polling questions, participants focused on one model, rather than three images as in Activity 1, and thought about whether the model would be appropriate in one or more of the design contexts. Participants also had the option to select “all of the above” or “none of the above.” Important to note is that while the same number of participants on average answered this question in the live poll as did Activity 1 (between 44 and 47), because multiple answers could be selected, the total responses often adds up to between 63 and 84 votes. This does not mean the number of people fluctuated with each polling opportunity, but that the number of design contexts selected for each question varied.

The pages that follow provide each model and the responses for the question in a bar chart. A “Key Features” section follows and highlights the same features that were discussed in the workshop prior to the live poll. For each building type, an Observations and Analysis section follows the reporting of the individual building models. This summary section discusses the responses in terms of key features and design contexts to try to determine what is appropriate for each design context, as indicated by community responses.

APARTMENT MODELS



Apartment 1 (Model A1)

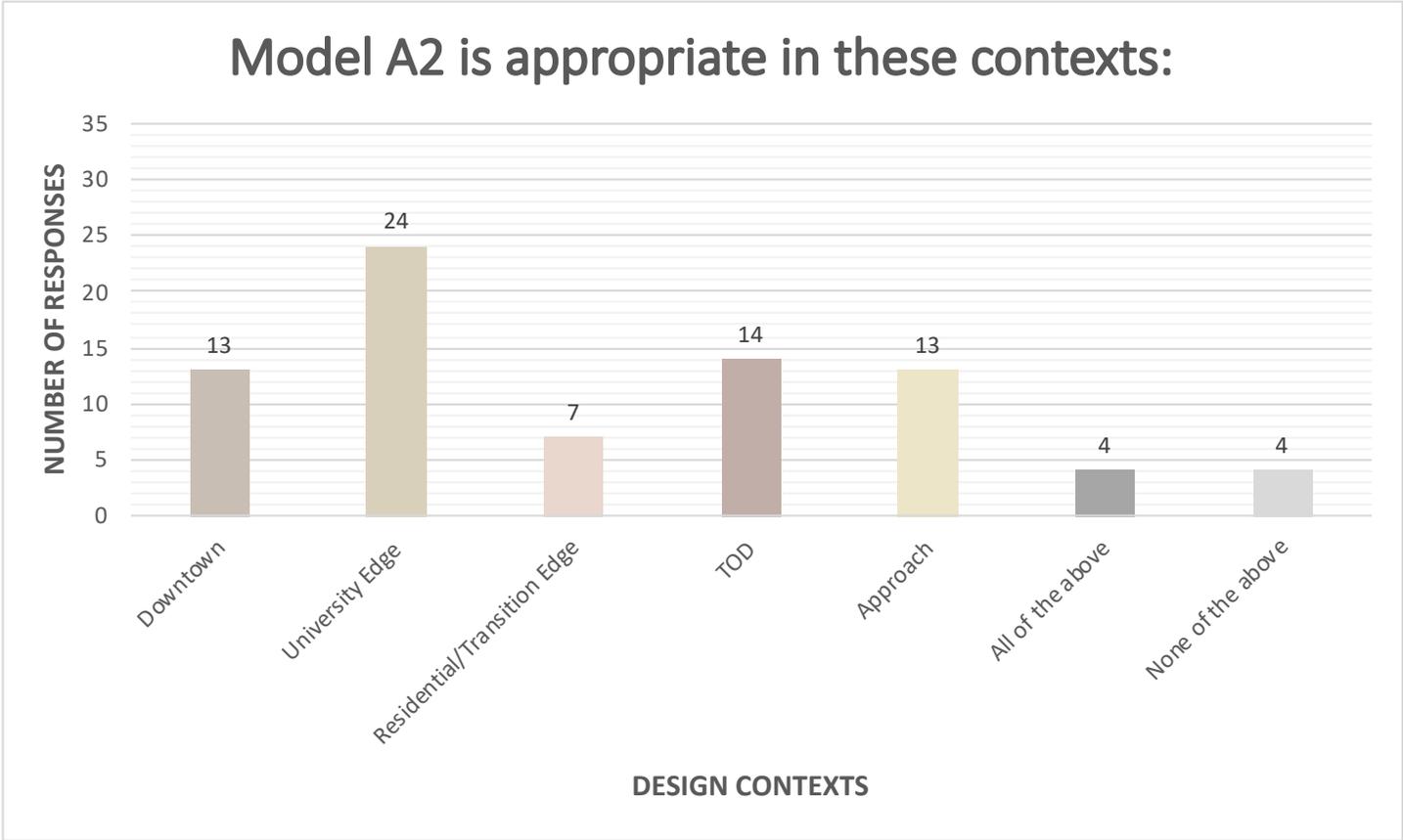


Key Features

- 2 stories with a partial 3rd story
- Flat and sloped roofs
- Landscaped front setback

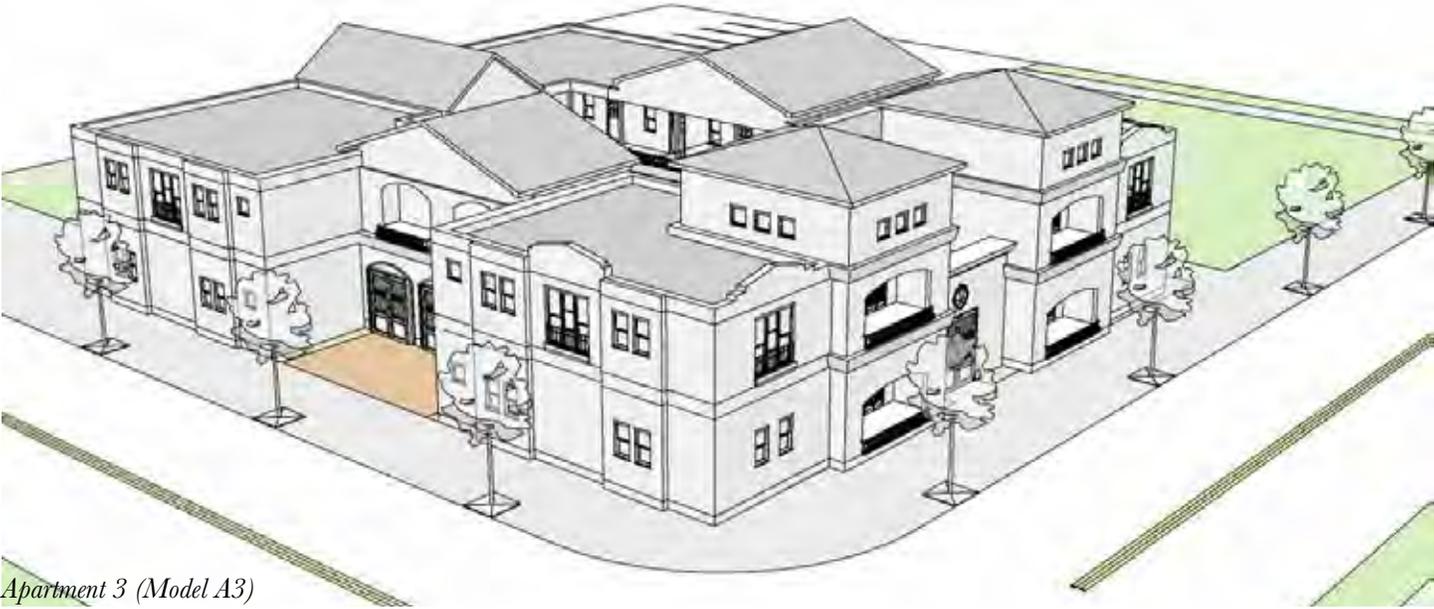


Apartment 2 (Model A2)



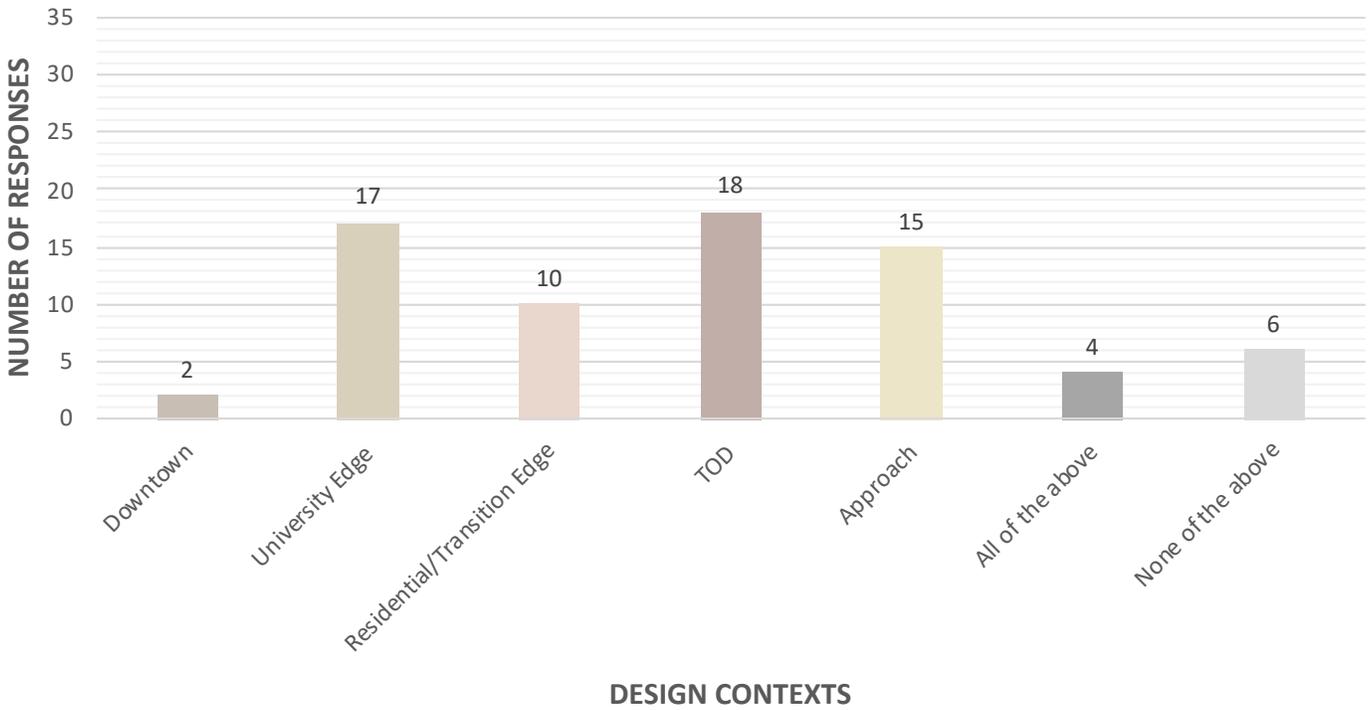
Key Features

- 2 stories with a partial 3rd story
- Flat and sloped roofs
- No front setback



Apartment 3 (Model A3)

Model A3 is appropriate in these contexts:



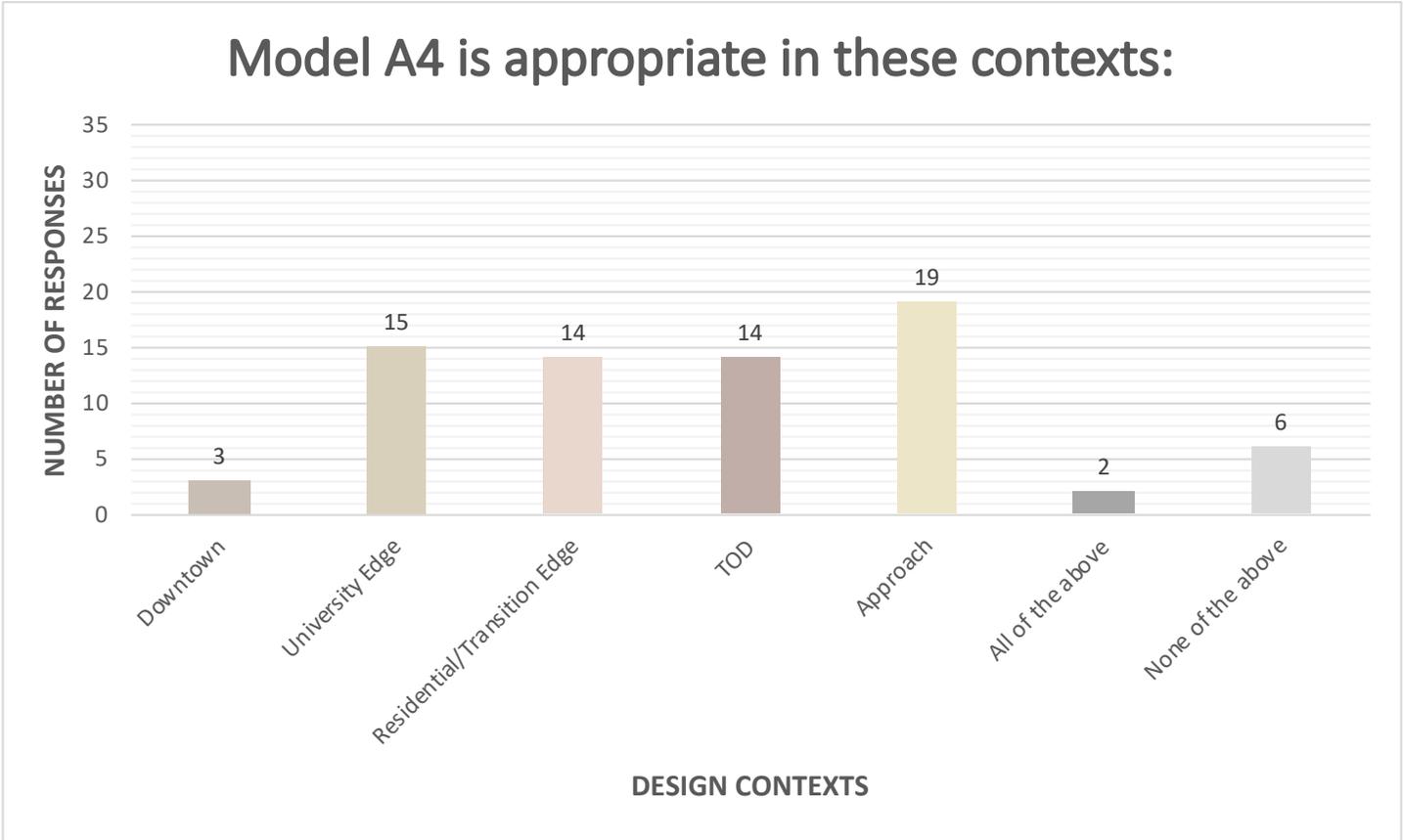
Key Features

- 2 stories with a partial 3rd story
- Flat and sloped roofs
- No front setback, but a plaza is incorporated near the entrance



Apartment 4 (Model A4)

Model A4 is appropriate in these contexts:



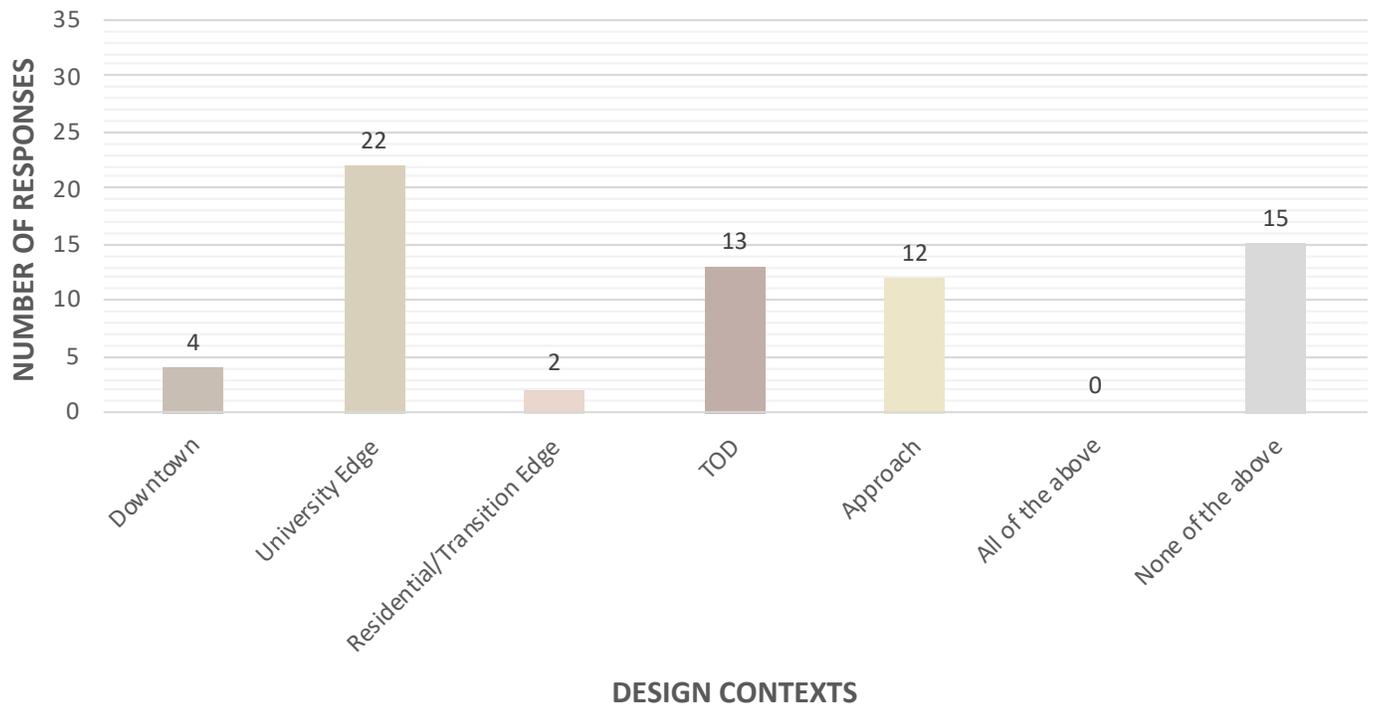
Key Features

- 3 stories
- Primarily sloped roofs
- Front setback with landscaped area



Apartment 5 (Model A5)

Model A5 is appropriate in these contexts:



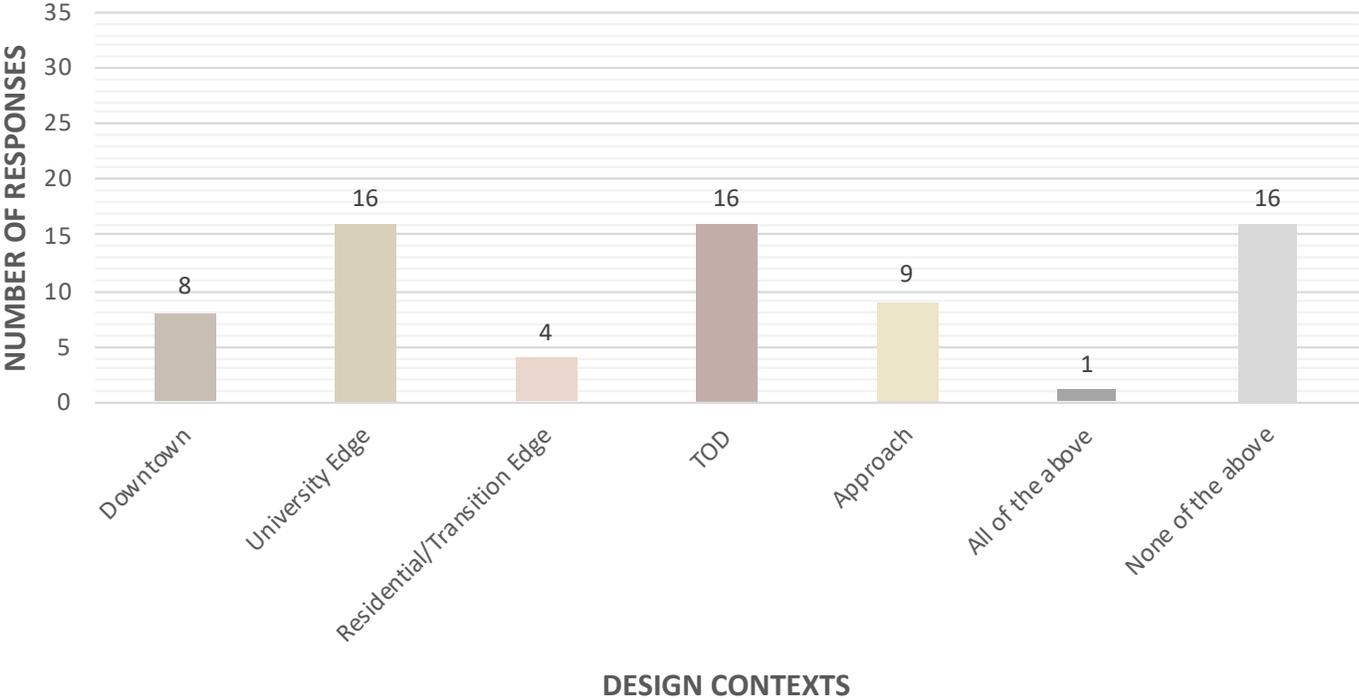
Key Features

- 4 stories
- Primarily flat roof
- Small front setback with landscaped area



Apartment 6 (Model A6)

Model A6 is appropriate in these contexts:



Key Features

- 4 stories
- Primarily flat roof
- No front setback

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Apartment 1 (Model A1)



Apartment 2 (Model A2)



Apartment 3 (Model A3)



Apartment 4 (Model A4)



Apartment 5 (Model A5)



Apartment 6 (Model A6)

Activity 3 began with a series of six apartment models that showed a range of building setbacks, building height, roof forms, and massing and articulation techniques. By exploring these variables through the use of building models, this expands on the information gathered during Activity 1 regarding compatible apartments in downtown as a whole. The sections that follow describe the results for apartments by design context.

Downtown

Incorporating the “All of the above” results into the tally for the apartment models appropriate in the Downtown design context, A2 received the most votes. Located at the sidewalk edge, this apartment is primarily two stories with a third story stepped back and covered with a gable roof. Wall offsets and projections break up the mass to ensure that this large building is not one sheer mass. Model A1 received the second highest number of votes, and is identical to A2 except for its small, landscaped setback. Key takeaways for the Downtown design context for apartment buildings include:

Setback

Apartment buildings located at the sidewalk edge are preferred, although a small, landscaped setback may be compatible in some cases.

Building Height

Two and three-story apartment buildings are preferred in the Downtown design context.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form that reflects buildings in the Downtown Historic District, are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

While there seems to be some openness to roof forms, feedback indicates that flat roof forms are preferred. Incorporating a few gable elements may be compatible.

Outdoor Space

Based on the models in this activity, it does not appear that outdoor plazas and courtyards are the most important design element for apartment buildings in the Downtown design context. A landscaped area between the sidewalk edge and building may also be compatible.

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Apartment 1 (Model A1)



Apartment 2 (Model A2)



Apartment 3 (Model A3)



Apartment 4 (Model A4)



Apartment 5 (Model A5)



Apartment 6 (Model A6)

University Edge

Responses for the University Edge design context were overall more accepting for the variety of apartments shown in the models. However, A1 and A2 received the highest number of votes for this design context. Both of these models show a primarily two story building, with a third story portion. The third story utilizes a gable roof while the two story portions utilize a flat roof. Wall offsets and projections help reduce the overall size of the building. The main difference between A1 and A2 lies in the setback, with A1 including a small, landscaped setback and A2 located at the sidewalk edge. Apartment models A3-A6 all received a fair number of votes as well, showing tolerance for a range of building heights, setbacks, and for potentially unique building forms. Key takeaways include:

Setback

Apartment buildings in the University Edge design context can be located at the sidewalk edge or include a small landscaped setback.

Building Height

While three story buildings are preferred, there is tolerance in the University Edge design context for taller buildings that incorporate a fourth story, although not at the street edge.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form that reflects buildings in the Downtown Historic District, are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules that are of a human scale is also important. However, there is also some tolerance for unique building forms.

Roof Form

A mix of flat and gable roof forms is acceptable based on participant feedback.

Outdoor Space

Outdoor spaces, such as courtyards, are compatible in the University Edge design context. There is a general acceptance for buildings located at the sidewalk edge and those with a small, landscaped setback.

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Apartment 1 (Model A1)



Apartment 2 (Model A2)



Apartment 3 (Model A3)



Apartment 4 (Model A4)



Apartment 5 (Model A5)



Apartment 6 (Model A6)

Residential/Transition Edge

Votes for apartments in the Residential/Transition Edge design context were highest for Model A1, a three story building with a mix of flat and gable roofs. There's a small, landscaped setback between the sidewalk and the building, and the building incorporates massing techniques to reduce the overall size of the building. Apartment A4 also received a high number of votes for the Residential/Transition Edge. This building shares similar features to A1 – a small, landscaped setback and modulation – but this model incorporates a larger third floor and more gable roofs. Important to note is that A5 and A6 - the four story apartment buildings with very little or no landscaped setback – both received very few votes for this design context. Key features include:

Setback

A landscaped setback is an important feature for this design context.

Building Height

Three story buildings with a two-story element in front is important for this context.

Building Form

Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules that are of a human scale is important for the Residential/Transition Edge.

Roof Form

A mix of flat and gable roof forms are compatible for this design context, although gable roof forms near the street seems to be preferred.

Outdoor Space

The outdoor space preferred for this design context, based on the model feedback, is a landscaped setback.

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Apartment 1 (Model A1)



Apartment 2 (Model A2)



Apartment 3 (Model A3)



Apartment 4 (Model A4)



Apartment 5 (Model A5)



Apartment 6 (Model A6)

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

While each of the apartment models received a fairly even response for the TOD design context, A3 stood out with the highest number of votes. This model is primarily two stories, with a small third story component. While there is no front setback, a small outdoor plaza is incorporated at the entryway. This building also incorporates a much more unique form in its mix of building modules and roof forms than the other apartments. Since the remaining five apartment buildings also had fairly high vote tallies, there seems to be a fair tolerance for a variety of conditions in the TOD design context. Overall, key features to consider include:

Setback

A small, landscaped setback is not necessary in this district, but may be tolerated in addition to locating the building at the sidewalk edge.

Building Height

While a two story building with partial three story components received the highest votes for the TOD design context, there is still tolerance for taller buildings, up to four stories at least, based on the models.

Building Form

Unique building forms are compatible in this design context. However, some massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules that are of a human scale seems to be desired based on feedback.

Roof Form

A mix of flat and gable roof forms are compatible in the TOD design context.

Outdoor Space

Outdoor spaces, such as courtyards, are compatible. There is a general acceptance for buildings located the sidewalk edge and those with a small, landscaped setback.

APARTMENTS: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Apartment 1 (Model A1)



Apartment 2 (Model A2)



Apartment 3 (Model A3)



Apartment 4 (Model A4)



Apartment 5 (Model A5)



Apartment 6 (Model A6)

Approach

Two of the six apartments received over 20 votes (including the “all of the above” category) for the Approach – A1 and A4, which have many similarities. Both include a landscaped setback, techniques to vary the massing along each wall, and a mix of flat and gable roof forms. A1 incorporates more flat roofs, and A4 incorporates more gable roof forms. The primary difference between the models is that A4 includes a larger third story than A1. While A2 and A3 also received a fair number of votes, A5 and A6 – the four-story buildings – did not receive a high number of votes. Key features include:

Setback

Apartment buildings should incorporate a small, landscaped setback between the sidewalk and building.

Building Height

Apartments that are perceived to be two stories at the street level, with the potential for three story components are preferred in the Approach design context. Based on the polling exercise, buildings with four or more stories may be undesired.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

A mix of flat and gable roof forms is compatible, although it appears that a gable roof form near the street edge is preferred.

Outdoor Space

A landscaped setback should be incorporated. There is also some tolerance for outdoor spaces such as a courtyard or plaza.

None of the above

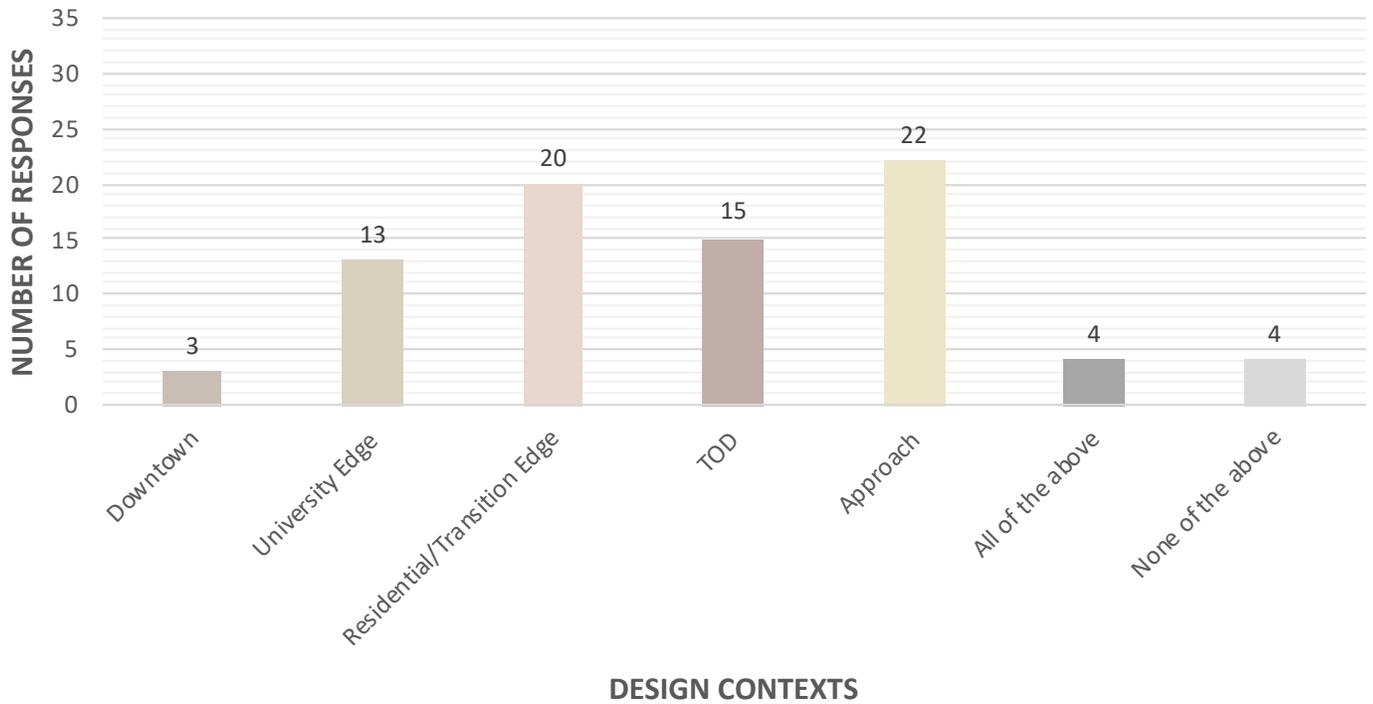
While the majority of the “none of the above” options for each apartment did not receive many votes, apartments A5 and A6 received 15 and 16 votes, respectively. The primary difference between these two models and models A1-A4 is that these are four story buildings. While the polling question does not confirm that this is the reason for high votes, it is possible that there is little desire for four story apartment buildings in downtown.

TOWNHOUSE MODELS



Townhouse 1 (Model T1)

Model T1 is appropriate in these contexts:

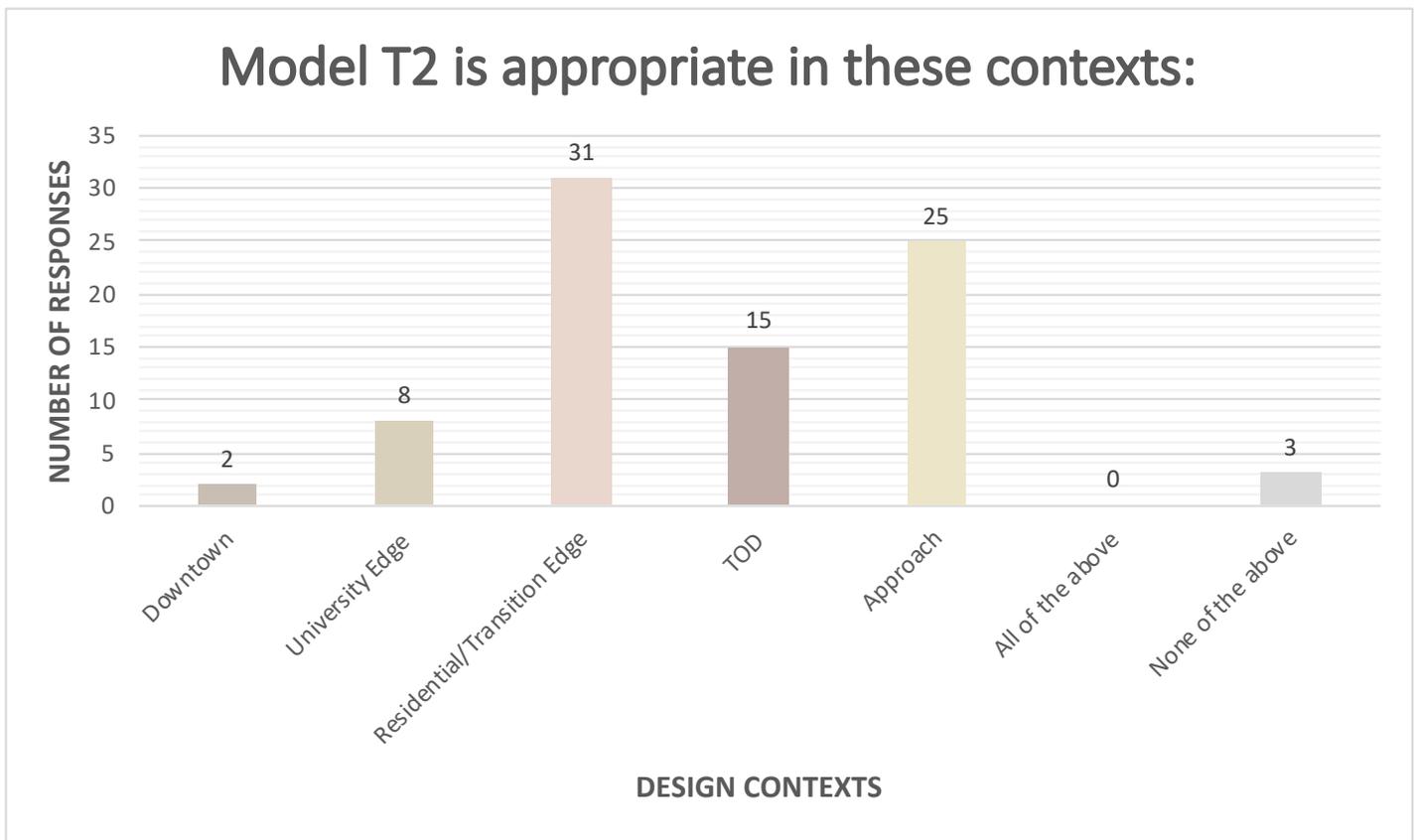


Key Features

- 3 stories
- Flat roof
- Landscaped, front setback
- Small front stoop



Townhouse 2 (Model T2)

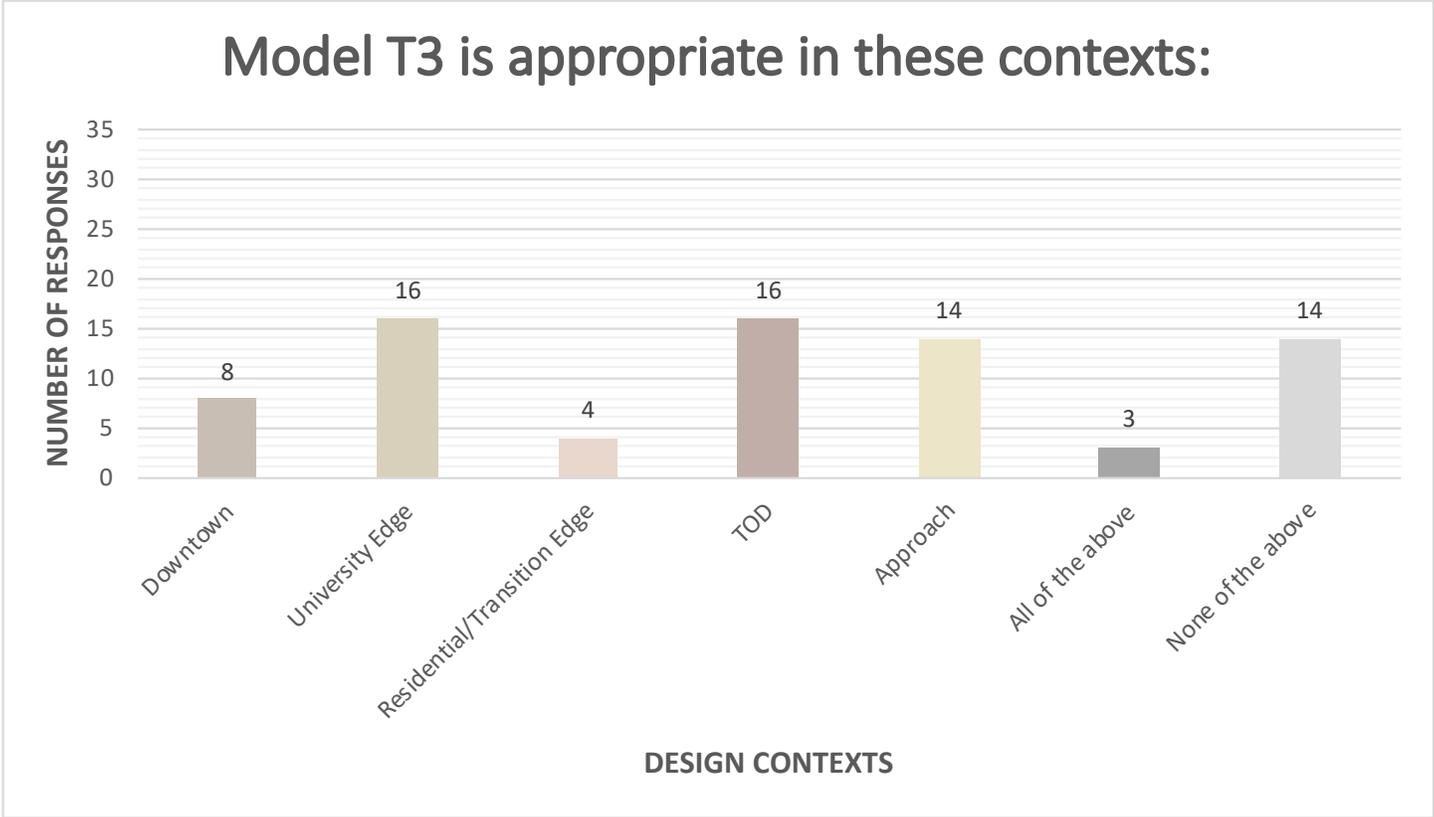


Key Features

- 2 stories
- Sloped roofs
- Landscaped, front yards
- Front porches



Model T3 is appropriate in these contexts:



Key Features

- 3 stories
- Flat roof
- No setback
- Small front patios

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Townhouse 1 (Model T1)



Townhouse 2 (Model T2)



Townhouse 3 (Model T3)

The second set of models participants reviewed during this activity was three townhouse models, which varied in setback, building form, roof form and detail. The sections that follow provide more detailed observations of what community members believe are compatible townhouse elements for each design context.

Downtown

Of the three townhouse models, participants favored townhouse 3, which has three stories, is located at the sidewalk edge, and is modulated by townhouse unit. Outdoor private spaces are incorporated in the form of an entry patio and balconies. While townhouse 1 received a fair number of votes, townhouse 2 only received 2 votes. This could be due to a number of factors but is likely due to the use of a gable roof form rather than a flat roof form. Key features for townhouses downtown include:

Setback

Little to no setback for townhomes Downtown is preferred, although there appears to be some acceptance for landscaped setbacks.

Building Height

Three story townhomes are compatible in the Downtown design context.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, likely by townhouse unit, that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

Flat roofs for townhouses in the Downtown design context are preferred.

Outdoor Space

A landscaped setback may be compatible, but outdoor space for townhouses in this design context comes in the form of private patios and balcony spaces.

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Townhouse 1 (Model T1)



Townhouse 2 (Model T2)



Townhouse 3 (Model T3)

University Edge

Two of the three townhouse models received high votes for the University Edge design context – T1 and T3. While T1 incorporates a landscaped setback and T3 is placed at the sidewalk edge, both forms use massing techniques to break up the units, and add balconies to articulate the façade. Also notable is the use of a flat roof in both models, rather than the gable roof as seen in model T2.

Setback

Townhomes located at the sidewalk edge or set back slightly to allow for a small, landscaped setback are compatible in the University Edge design context.

Building Height

Three story townhomes are compatible for this design context.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, likely by townhouse unit, that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

Flat roofs for townhouses in the University Edge design context are preferred.

Outdoor Space

A landscaped setback may be compatible, but outdoor space for townhouses in this design context comes in the form of private patios and balcony spaces.

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Townhouse 1 (Model T1)



Townhouse 2 (Model T2)



Townhouse 3 (Model T3)

Residential/Transition Edge

Townhouse 2 received the highest number of votes for the Residential/Transition Edge design context. This model incorporates a small, landscaped setback, gable-roofed units with some variation in the façade design, and offsets by unit. Model T1 also received a fair number of votes, while Model T3 received very few votes. As these two models utilize a similar building form, the difference that participants may have been responding to is the use or lack of a small, landscaped setback.

Setback

Townhomes in the Residential/Transition Edge design context should incorporate a small, landscaped setback between the townhouse and sidewalk.

Building Height

Two story townhomes are preferred for this design context. Three story townhomes may be compatible in some cases.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, likely by townhouse unit, that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

Gable roofs for townhouses in the Residential/Transition Edge design context are preferred.

Outdoor Space

A landscaped setback is crucial in this design context. Balconies may also be incorporated into the townhouse design to provide additional outdoor space.

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Townhouse 1 (Model T1)



Townhouse 2 (Model T2)



Townhouse 3 (Model T3)

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Townhouses 1 and 3 received an equal number of votes in the TOD design context, with Townhouse 2 close behind in votes. These tally results show that variety in building form, placement and design are all acceptable in this design context.

Setback

Townhomes in the TOD design context may be set back from the sidewalk edge and include a small, landscaped area, or may be located at the sidewalk edge.

Building Height

Three story townhomes are preferred for this design context. Two story townhomes may also be compatible in some cases.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, likely by townhouse unit, that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

Flat roof forms are preferred for the TOD design context, but a gable roof may be compatible in some cases.

Outdoor Space

Outdoor space may take the form of small, landscaped setback, a private patio, or a balcony in the TOD design context.

TOWNHOUSES: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Townhouse 1 (Model T1)



Townhouse 2 (Model T2)



Townhouse 3 (Model T3)

Approach

Townhouses 1 and 2 both received a high number of votes, showing that a landscaped building setback is an important feature for this design context. The roof form and overall building design, and building height differ between these two townhomes illustrating that flexibility is compatible in many ways in this design context.

Setback

Townhomes in the Approach design context should incorporate a small, landscaped area between the sidewalk and building.

Building Height

Two and three story townhomes are preferred for this design context.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, likely by townhouse unit, that are of a human scale is also important.

Roof Form

Flat and gable roof forms are compatible in the Approach design context.

Outdoor Space

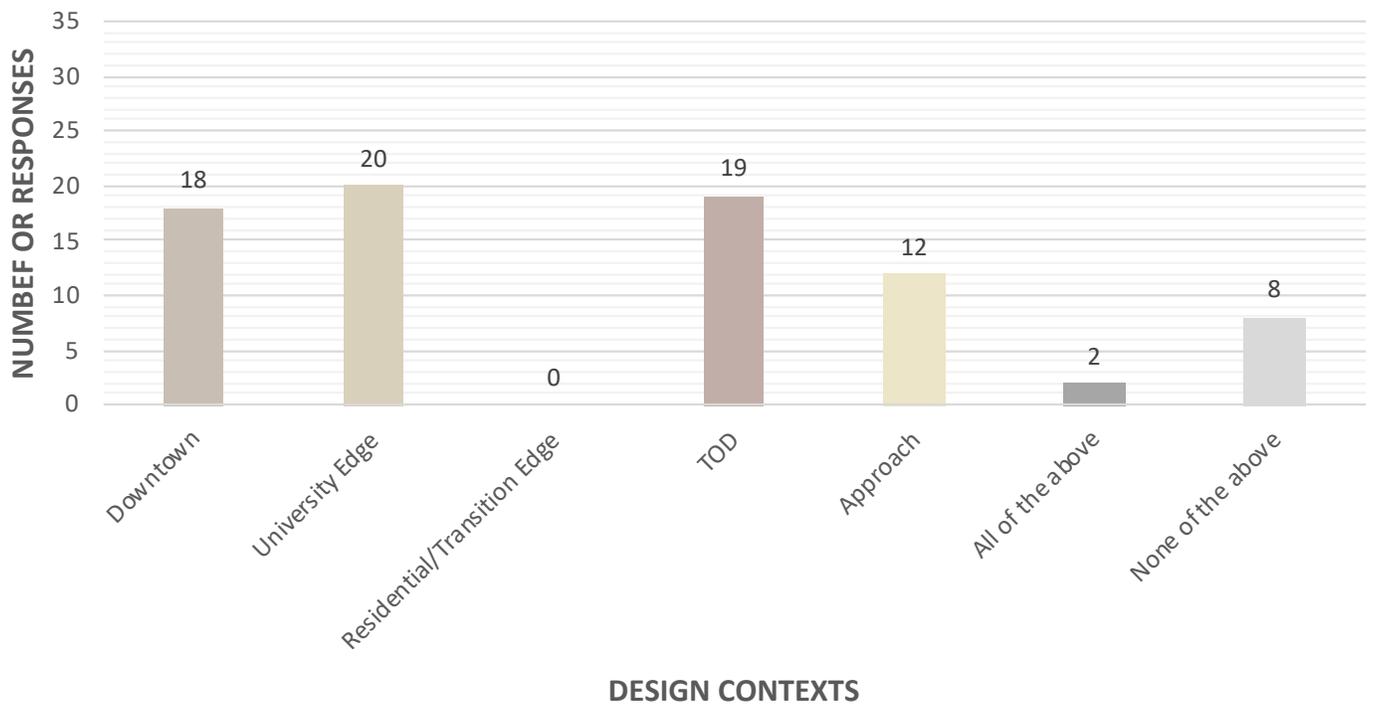
While a landscaped setback is essential for this design context, private outdoor space can also be incorporated through the use of a porch or balcony.

MIXED USE MODELS



Mixed Use 1 (Model MU1)

Model MU1 is appropriate in these contexts:



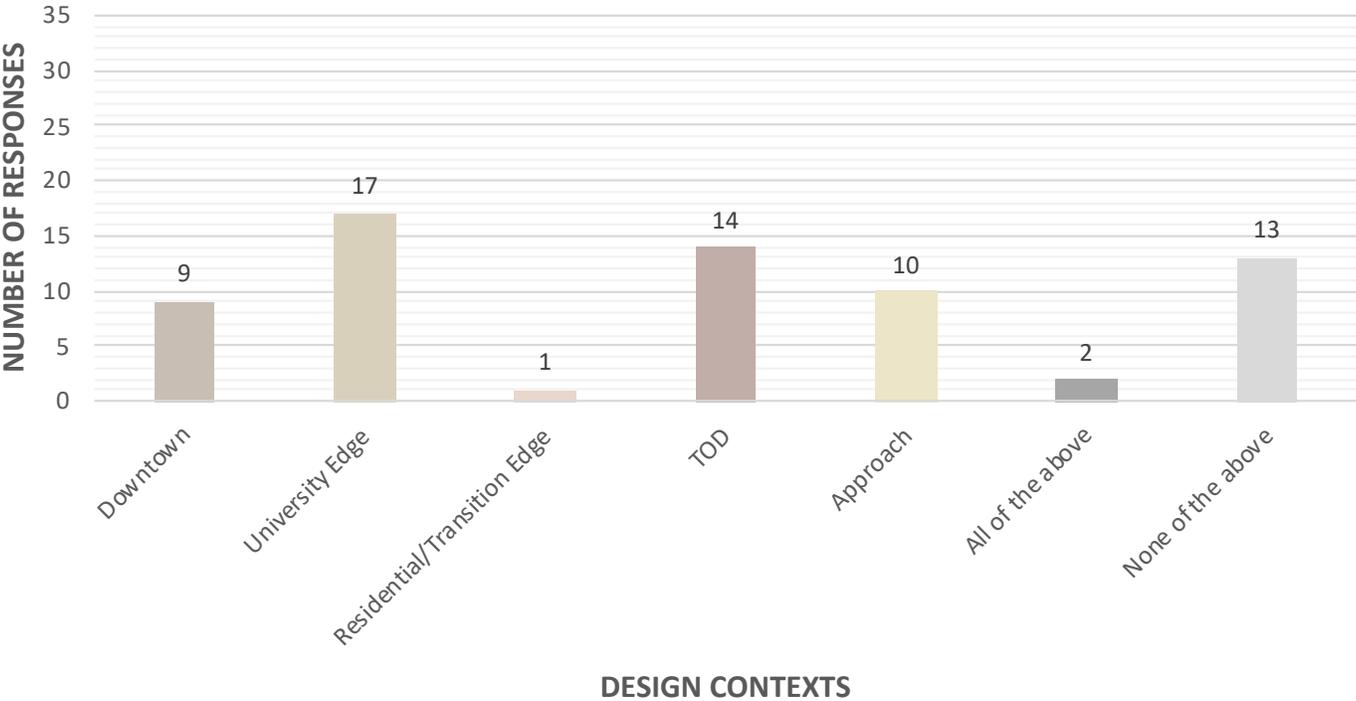
Key Features

- 4 stories
- Flat roof
- Stepback at the second floor for most of building
- Awnings provide some shade for pedestrians



Mixed Use 2 (Model MU2)

Model MU2 is appropriate in these contexts:

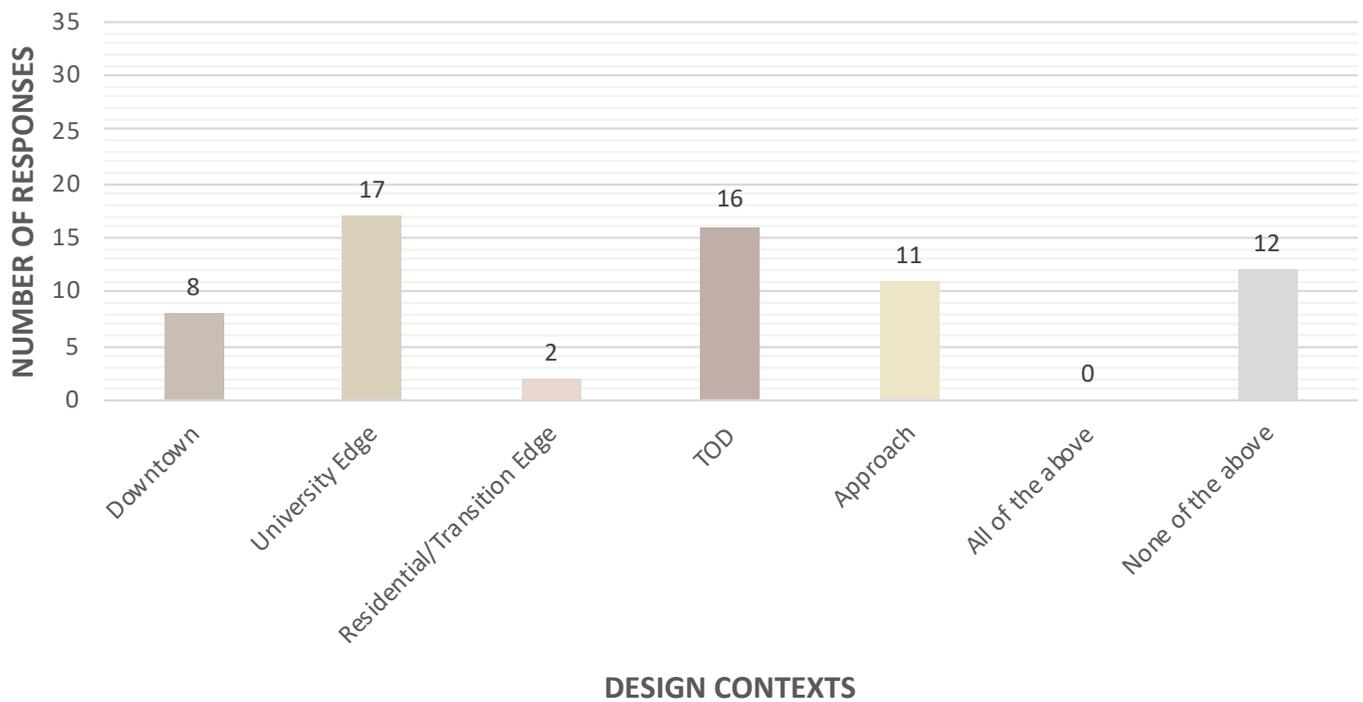


Key Features

- 4 stories
- Flat roof
- No 2nd floor stepback; instead, a second floor inset
- Awnings provide some shade for pedestrians



Model MU3 is appropriate in these contexts:



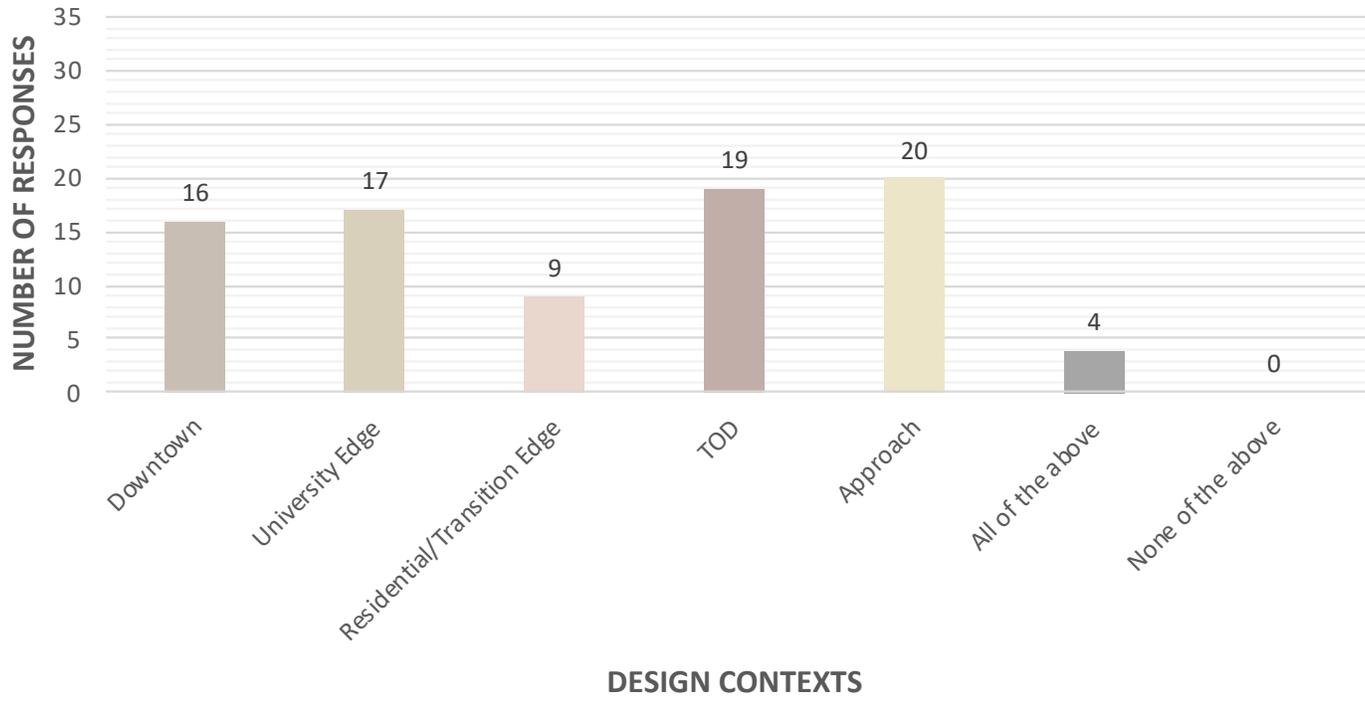
Key Features

- 5 stories
- Flat roof
- 3 story portion in front
- Small plaza



Mixed Use 4 (Model MU4)

Model MU4 is appropriate in these contexts:



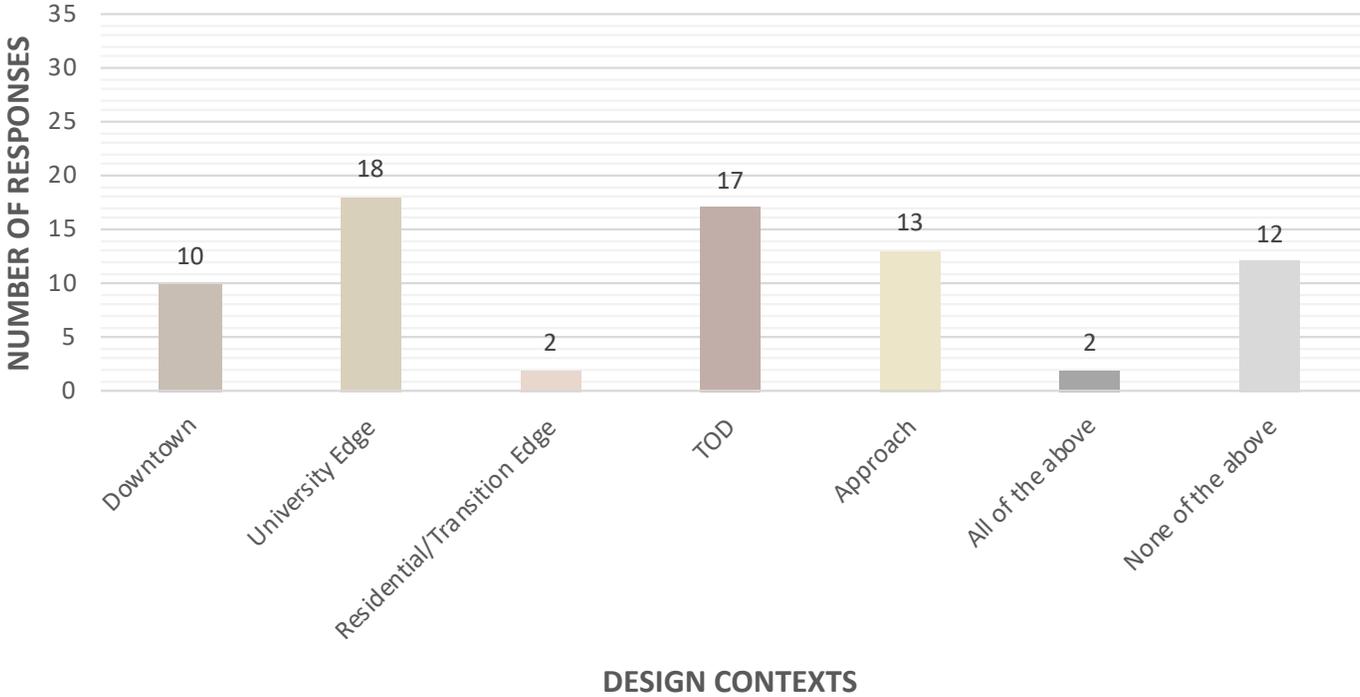
Key Features

- 3 stories, with two-story component (at the left)
- 3rd story stepback
- Flat roof
- Awnings provide shade for pedestrians
- Small forecourt provides outdoor space



Mixed Use 5 (Model MU5)

Model MU5 is appropriate in these contexts:



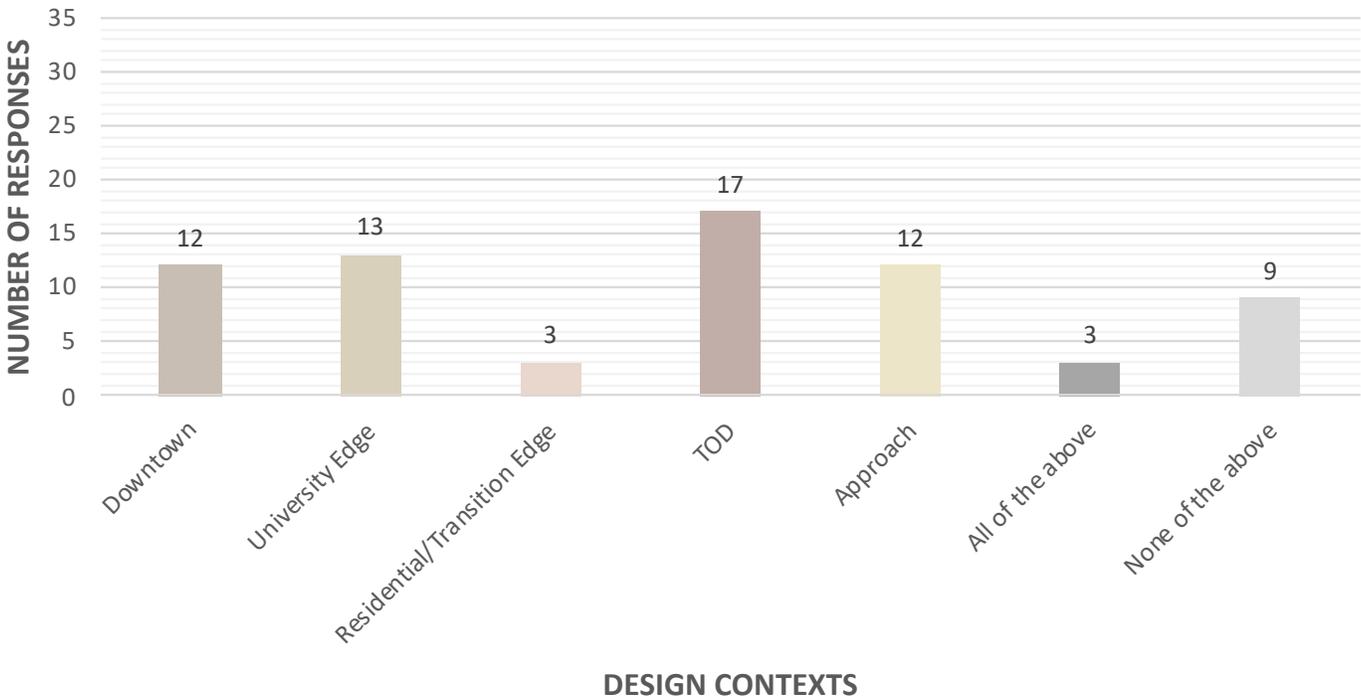
Key Features

- 4 stories, with two-story component
- Stepback at 3rd and 4th story
- Flat roof
- Awnings provide shade for pedestrians
- Small forecourt provides outdoor space



Mixed-Use 6 (Model MU6)

Model MU6 is appropriate in these contexts:

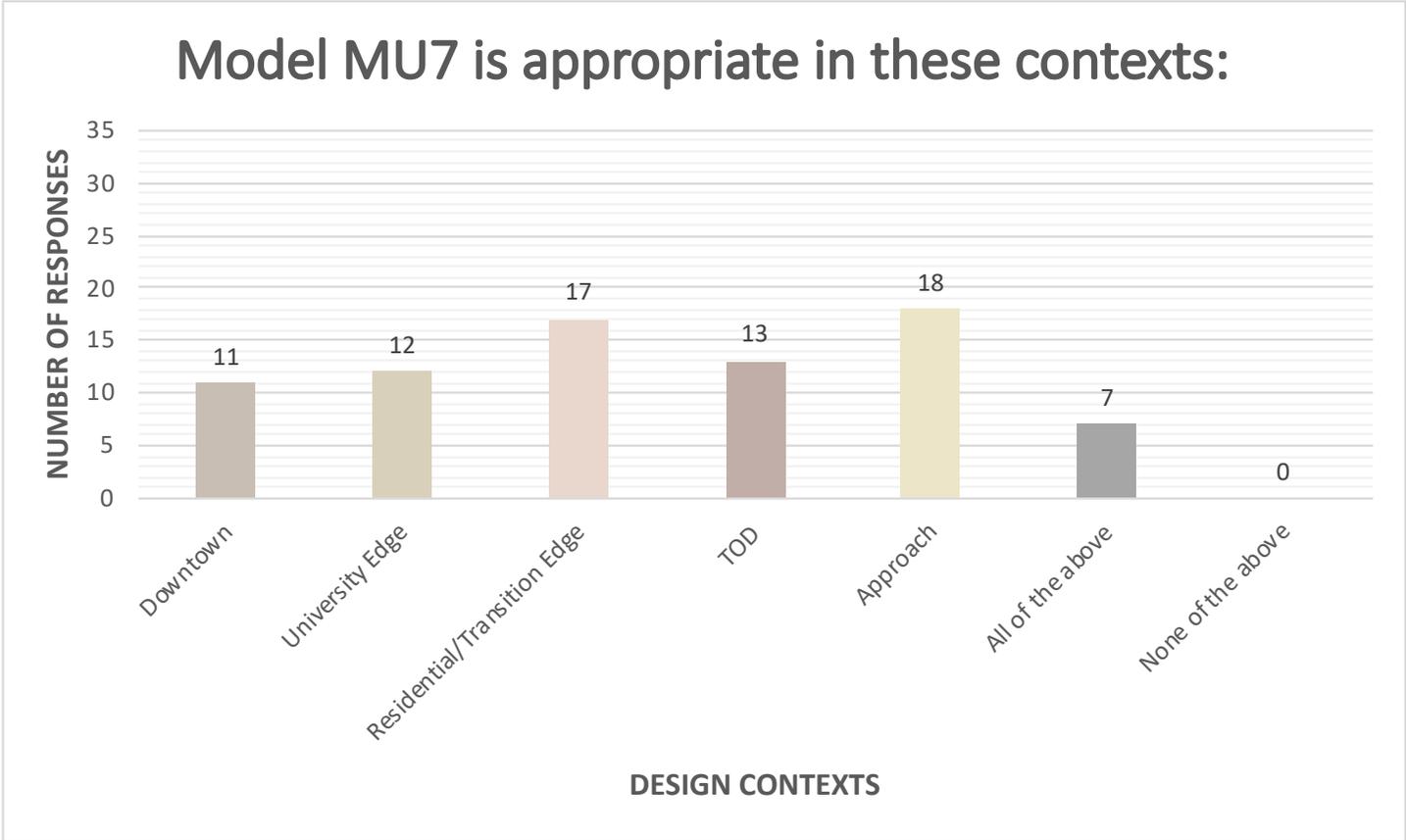


Key Features

- 3 stories
- Flat roof
- 3rd floor stepback
- Small forecourt



Mixed Use 7 (Model MU7)

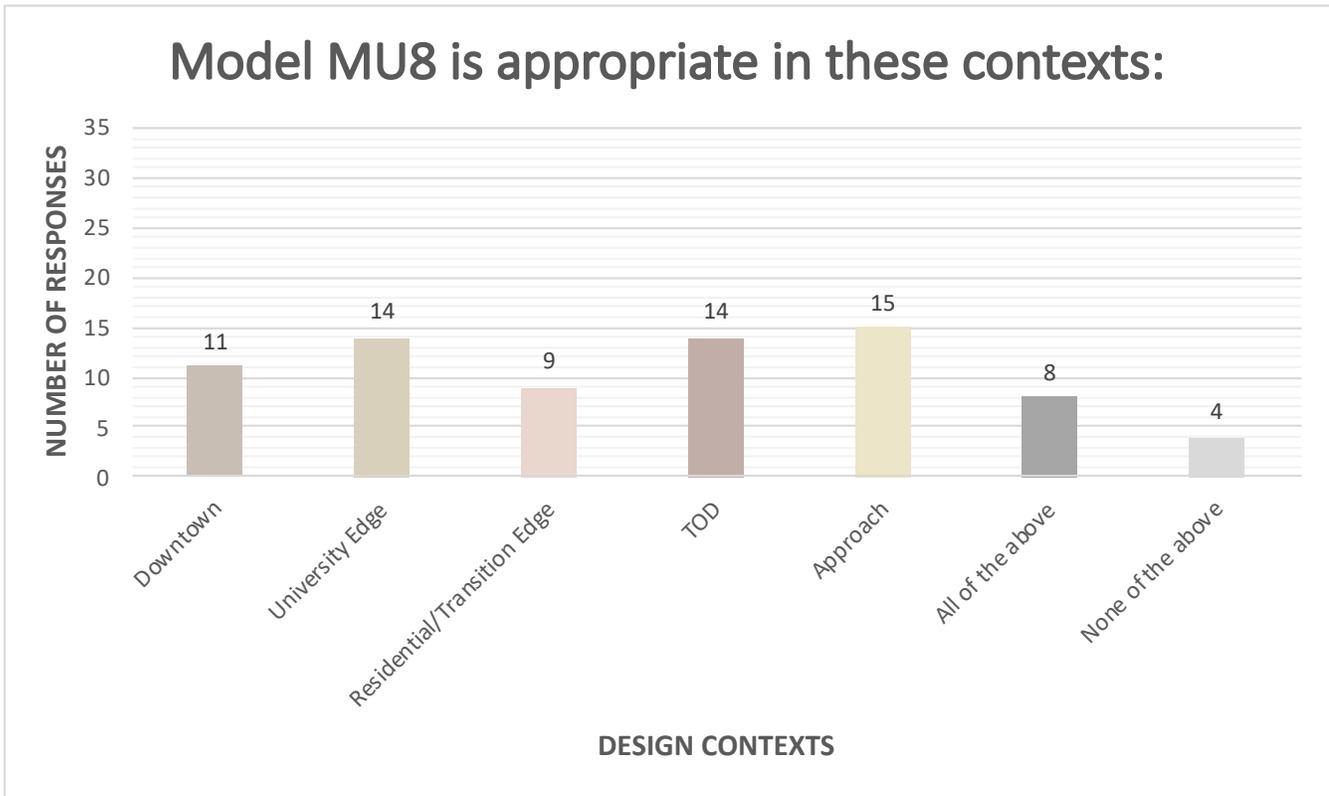


Key Features

- 2 stories, with 1-story element in front
- Flat roof
- Outdoor spaces incorporated into building design

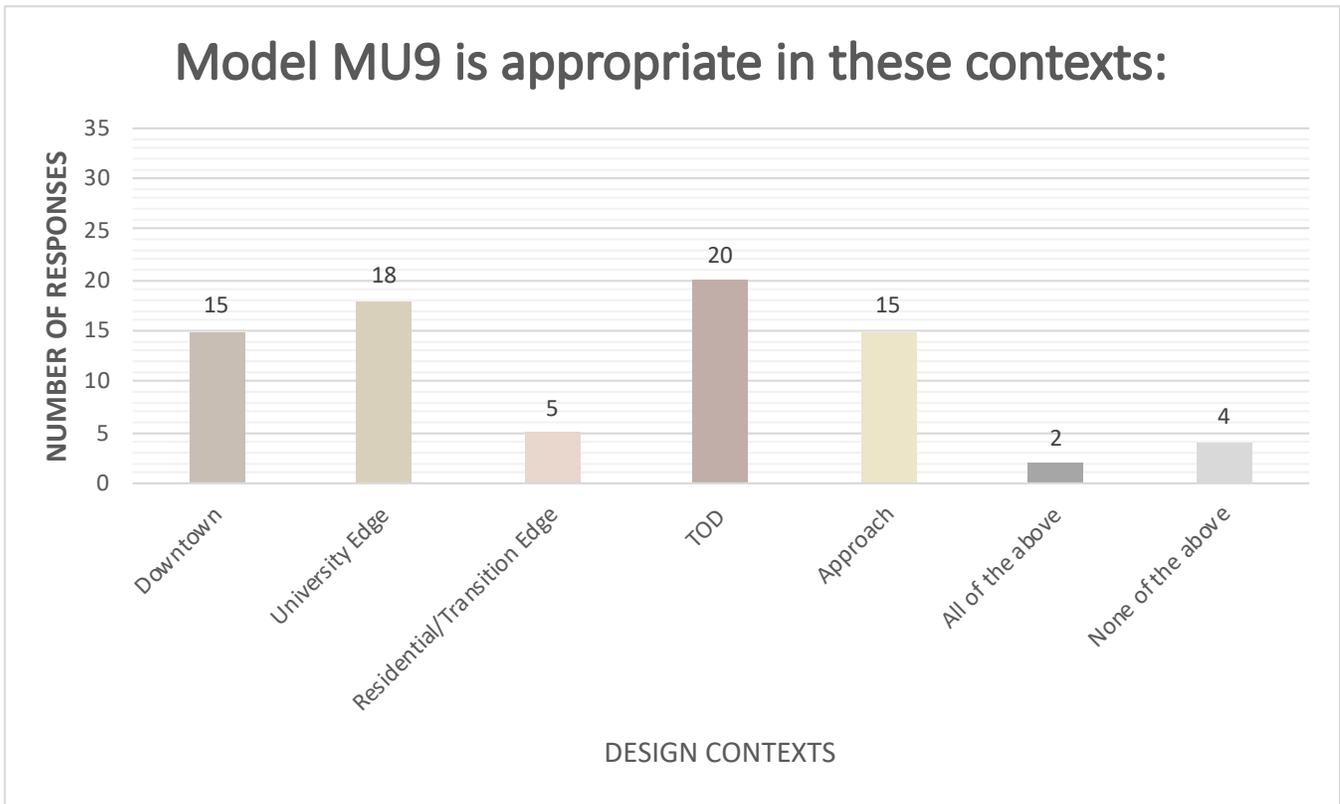


Mixed Use 8 (Model MU8)



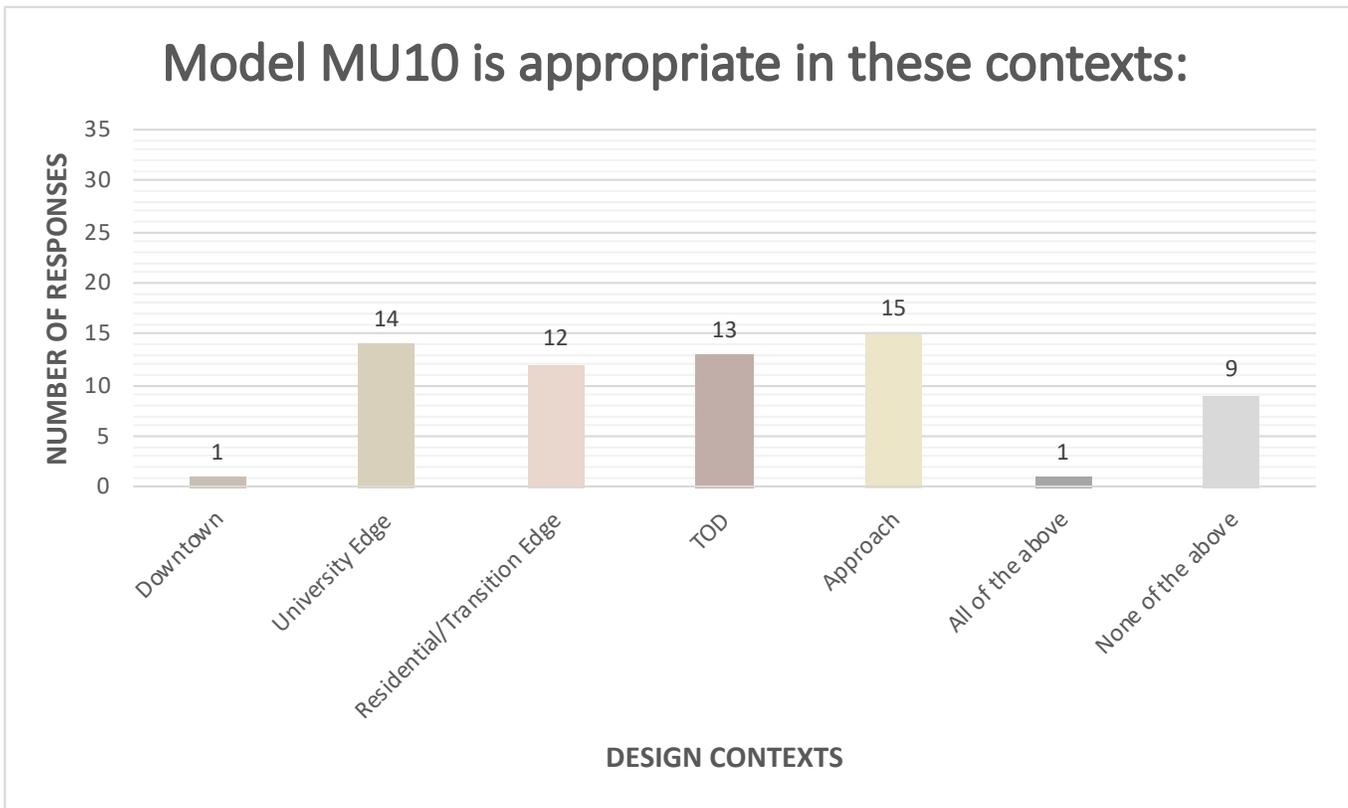
Key Features

- 3 stories
- 2nd story stepback
- Flat roof
- Canopy to provide shade to pedestrians



Key Features

- 3 stories
- Flat roof
- Partial 3rd story stepback
- Canopy to provide shade to pedestrians



Key Features

- 3 stories, with partial fourth floor in dormer
- Step back at 2nd floor as balcony
- Sloped roof

MIXED USE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



Mixed Use 1 (Model MU1)



Mixed Use 2 (Model MU2)



Mixed Use 3 (Model MU3)



Mixed Use 4 (Model MU4)



Mixed Use 5 (Model MU5)

The final set of models participants reviewed during Activity 3 was a set of ten mixed use models. Each of the models illustrated a variety of approaches to building height, modulation, articulation, roof form and outdoor space. The sections that follow provide more detailed observations of community member input regarding compatible mixed use buildings for each design context.

Downtown

Out of the ten mixed use building models, two of the models – MU1 and MU4 – tied for the most number of votes. MU1 shows a four story building with a small stepback in massing at the second, third and fourth stories. The building utilizes a flat roof and awnings at the street level provide shade for pedestrians. While MU4 also utilizes a flat roof and awnings at the street level, it is only three stories in height, with a stepback at the third story. A small forecourt is also provided along part of the building to incorporate an opportunity for outdoor dining space. In addition to noting the top two mixed use models for the downtown design context, it is also important to note that MU10 received only two votes. While this building is set at the sidewalk edge like MU1 and MU4, it does not utilize a flat roof or step back the massing as effectively as the two high vote models.

Setback

Mixed use buildings in the Downtown design context should be located at the sidewalk edge, according to participant feedback. However, a small setback along part of the building may be compatible if the space is utilized for a forecourt or plaza.

Building Height

Mixed use buildings in the Downtown design context that appear to be three or four stories at the street edge are preferred. There is also some tolerance for two story buildings.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules and to step back taller sections of the building in order to retain a human scale is compatible.

Roof Form

Flat roof forms for mixed use buildings are preferred in the Downtown design context. Participant feedback did not support gable roof forms.

Outdoor Space

Incorporating a forecourt or small plaza along the sidewalk edge is compatible.

MIXED USE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use 6 (Model MU6)



Mixed Use 7 (Model MU7)



Mixed Use 8 (Model MU8)



Mixed Use 9 (Model MU9)



Mixed Use 10 (Model MU10)

University Edge

While two of the mixed use models – MU1 and MU8 – received the highest number of votes, a majority of the models also received a fairly high number of votes showing a tolerance for a wide variety of building features in the University Edge design context. Focusing on MU1 and MU8, however, a few key building features stand out. Both buildings utilize a flat roof and have a highly articulated ground floor with awnings to provide shade. While MU1 is a four story building with some stepback of upper floors, MU8 is a three story building that also exhibits a similar stepping back of the third floor. Both buildings also show the potential for utilizing the upper floor stepback area as balcony space.

Setback

Mixed use buildings in the University Edge design context are most compatible when located at the sidewalk edge. There may be some situations in which a small forecourt in a partial building setback is also compatible.

Building Height

Buildings that appear to be two stories at the street edge, but that have three or four stories total are preferred for the University Edge design context. There is also some tolerance for two story buildings.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilizing massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules and to step back taller sections of the building in order to retain a human scale is preferred.

Roof Form

Flat roof forms for mixed use buildings are compatible in the University Edge design context. Participant feedback did not support gable roof forms.

Outdoor Space

Utilizing upper story building stepbacks for outdoor balcony space is compatible in this design context. Incorporating a forecourt or small plaza along the sidewalk edge may be compatible.

MIXED USE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use 1 (Model MU1)



Mixed Use 2 (Model MU2)



Mixed Use 3 (Model MU3)



Mixed Use 4 (Model MU4)



Mixed Use 5 (Model MU5)

Residential/Traditional Edge

Compared to the previous two design contexts, votes for many of the mixed use models were very low for the Residential/Transition Edge. MU1,2,3,5,6, and 9 all received a very low number of votes. While each of these buildings has unique features, all but MU5 have portions of the building that extend beyond two stories high without any setback, which is likely part of the vote response. MU7 and MU8 received the highest number of votes, both illustrating that lower building heights are more compatible for this design context. One and two story elements seem to be important at the street edge, but stepping back after the second story is a necessity. Extending beyond three stories did not receive participant support. MU7 and MU8 also utilize flat roofs and incorporate outdoor spaces, although in different locations, showing that building height may be one of the key features for this context.

Setback

Mixed use buildings in the Residential/Transition Edge design context can be located at the sidewalk edge or incorporate a small setback that is used for outdoor space.

Building Height

Buildings that appear to be one or two stories at the street edge are preferred for this design context. Three story elements may be compatible if stepped back from the street edge.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilize massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, and most importantly, to step back sections of the building taller than two stories.

Roof Form

Flat roof forms for mixed use buildings are compatible in the Residential/Transition Edge design context. Gable roof forms may be compatible in some cases.

Outdoor Space

Utilizing upper story building setbacks for outdoor balcony space is compatible in this design context. Incorporating a forecourt or small plaza along the sidewalk edge is also compatible.

MIXED USE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use 6 (Model MU6)



Mixed Use 7 (Model MU7)



Mixed Use 8 (Model MU8)



Mixed Use 9 (Model MU9)



Mixed Use 10 (Model MU10)

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Many of the mixed use building models received a fairly high number of votes for the TOD design context, but one received the highest number of votes – MU4. This three story building is located at the sidewalk edge, with a small portion set back to provide space for outdoor dining. The third story is stepped back slightly so two stories is the visible height at the street level. Two models – MU8 and MU9 – followed close behind MU4 and showed similar design features including building form, articulation, the use of a flat roof, and stepping back the building at the third story to ensure the key building height appeared to be two stories at the street level.

Setback

Mixed use buildings in the TOD design context can be located at the sidewalk edge or incorporate a small setback that is used for outdoor space.

Building Height

Buildings that appear to be two stories at the street level are preferred in this design context. A third story that is stepped back may be compatible. There is also some tolerance for four story buildings, with a similar step back at the highest stories.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilize massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, and most importantly, to step back sections of the building taller than two stories.

Roof Form

Flat roof forms for mixed use buildings are compatible in the TOD design context. Participant feedback did not support gable roof forms in the TOD design context.

Outdoor Space

Utilizing upper story building setbacks for outdoor balcony space is compatible in this design context. Incorporating a forecourt or small plaza along the sidewalk edge is also compatible.

MIXED USE: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)



Mixed Use 1 (Model MU1)



Mixed Use 2 (Model MU2)



Mixed Use 3 (Model MU3)



Mixed Use 4 (Model MU4)



Mixed Use 5 (Model MU5)

Approach

Three of the mixed use buildings models stood out in votes for the Approach design context – MU7, MU4, and MU8. Each of these buildings varies in their design, but each is low in scale compared to some of the options. (Notably, MU2 and MU3, two of the tallest mixed use building models received the lowest number of votes for the Approach design context.) MU4 and MU8 are both three story buildings with a stepped back third story. MU4 incorporates a two story portion of the building, as does MU7, which also has one-story modules. Each of these three buildings utilizes a flat roof and incorporating outdoor space, whether through a setback at the ground floor or through balcony space when stepping a third story back, is important for this design context.

Setback

Mixed use buildings in the Approach design context can be located at the sidewalk edge or incorporate a small setback that is used for outdoor space.

Building Height

Buildings that appear to be two stories at the street edge are preferred for the Approach design context. One story building components may be incorporated as well. Participant feedback did not support four and five story building components for this design context.

Building Form

Buildings that utilize a traditional form are preferred. Utilize massing and articulation techniques to divide a building into modules, and most importantly, to step back sections of the building taller than two stories.

Roof Form

Flat roof forms for mixed use buildings are preferred in the Approach design context. Participant feedback did not support gable roof forms in this design context.

Outdoor Space

Utilizing upper story building setbacks for outdoor balcony space is compatible in this design context. Incorporating a forecourt or small plaza along the sidewalk edge is also compatible.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Input provided by community members in each of the three workshop activities provided an important look at what the participants believe is compatible design for future development in downtown San Marcos. The live polling in Activities 1 and 3, and the written vision statement comments and suggestions in Activity 2 each provided a unique look at a variety of design elements that are preferred in the downtown as a whole as well as each of the design contexts. The following sections provide a brief summary regarding design features, design contexts and other information gleaned from this workshop.

Design context boundaries and naming

While no major changes were suggested for design context boundaries, capturing the correct parcels is important as this effort moves forward. Similarly, the names for each design context need to be rethought to clarify confusion between the intent of the context and the downtown as a whole. While all names should be reviewed, participants specifically mentioned that the “Downtown” name is confusing because it is currently an individual context name as well as the name for all the design contexts as a whole. One participant suggested renaming this context to the “Core.” Participants noted that the “Residential/Transition Edge” design context refers to the use within the context, which does not happen with any of the other names. This name also indicates transition, even though this is not the only design context where transitioning is important.

Compatibility with historic buildings

In each of the three activities, a key theme emerged of the importance of ensuring new development is compatible in form, scale, articulation and material with historic buildings in the Downtown Historic District and throughout downtown San Marcos. While the level of compatibility may differ between the design contexts, even in the contexts that are farther from the historic district or that might allow for higher density, taller buildings and more creativity, participants indicated the need to work towards compatibility for all design contexts. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including building stepbacks at taller heights, modulation to reduce a continuous wall plane and create widths similar to those of historic buildings, and activating the ground floor.

Reflecting San Marcos style and sense of place

Participant comments on the vision statements indicate that new buildings should be designed to reflect San Marcos’ unique sense of place. While this includes designing new buildings to be compatible with historic buildings, it also means allowing for contemporary designs that are compatible, utilizing materials that are traditional in the San Marcos context, and designing for outdoor spaces that are shaded and pleasant for use in many seasons.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS (cont)

Transitioning to residential neighborhoods

While previous community outreach events hinted at the need for examining transitions to residential neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown, activities 2 and 3 in this workshop confirmed this direction. This was particularly emphasized for the Residential/Transition Edge and Approach design contexts. Participants noted the need to expand the definitions to include the wide range of existing contexts and the cultural importance of many places in the Approach design context. Concurrently, participants recognized the importance of lower building heights, landscaped front setbacks, and incorporating forecourts and plaza spaces for a variety of building types in both of these design contexts. Strategies for these areas need to be further explored to ensure new development does not overwhelm adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Building height

While five stories are currently permitted throughout downtown San Marcos, many of the participant responses indicate that five stories are not preferred everywhere, and may only be compatible in one or two design contexts. Lower building heights are especially important in the Downtown, Residential/Transition Edge, and Approach design contexts. Feedback from the three activities provided a few ways in which this could be accomplished for each of the design contexts, but it is clear that five stories at the street level is not supported by participants.

Outdoor spaces

While not compatible at the ground level in every design context, incorporating some type of outdoor space is key for new development. This may include balcony space, forecourts and plazas, front porches or landscaped setbacks. This form of building activation resonated with workshop participants and should be considered in new building design moving forward.

Traditional building materials

State legislation limits the regulation of building materials. However, it may be a technique to address in illustrating how building designs may achieve a sense of articulation and variation in massing through changes in materials. As indicated through Activity 1, as well as some notes in Activity 2, building material selection and application is key in downtown San Marcos. Masonry materials that reflect traditional masonry materials used on historic buildings are most compatible, and should be encouraged in new building design. While more contemporary accent materials were often well received, they were preferred only when truly used as an accent rather than a design element that overwhelmed the primary material or the building features.

