



Code SMTX Think Tank Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 2015
6:00 pm
San Marcos Activity Center, 501 E. Hopkins
AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **30 Minute Citizen Comment Period.** The Think Tank welcomes citizen comments. Anyone wishing to speak must sign in with the secretary before the meeting and observe a three-minute time limit.
4. **Approval of Minutes from August 5, 2015 and September 2, 2015**
5. **Announcements regarding the replacement of certain Think Tank members**
6. **Review and Discussion of Think Tank Response to September 2 Issue Exploration Items**
7. **Issue Exploration – Character Districts**
 - a. **General Overview**
 - b. **Development Process**
 - c. **Employment and Light Industrial within Intensity Zones**
 - d. **Architectural Standards**
8. **Next Steps**
 - a. **Future Agenda Items**
 - b. **September 30 Joint P&Z and City Council Workshop**
 - c. **Outreach Efforts**
9. **Questions from the Press and Public.**
10. **Adjourn.**

Discussion Topics Refined – From 7/22/15 Think Tank Meeting

1. How will regulating plans in Employment Centers be established and will the *Preferred Scenario Amendment* (PSA) process be expedited for employment projects
2. Will *Planned Development Districts* (PDDs) be allowed in the new code? Is there enough flexibility in the new code that PDD's will not be needed as an option?
3. How are existing conventional zoning districts changing through the new Code?
 - a. Changes to Development Standards
 - b. Changes to uses
4. What is the process for future rezoning requests in neighborhoods specifically in
 - a. Transition areas
 - b. Corridors
 - c. And commercial nodes
5. Where, when, and how are Accessory Dwelling units allowed? What are the size and location standards associated?
6. Is the proposed process for regulating plans realistic and feasible for implementation where there is fragmented ownership? How can property owners amend the regulating plans if needed?
7. Will Special Districts be carried over from the existing code and will new districts be permitted? What is the difference between a Special District and PDD?
8. Are there coding tools that can be used to encourage schools to embed within the neighborhood?
9. Does the new code provide enough diversity of housing types?
10. What is the process for rebuilding a non-conforming structure?
11. What are the minimum acreage requirements for Character Based Zoning (CBZ)?
12. How can existing and proposed "Light Industrial" (LI) uses be accommodated in Character Districts?
13. When and how does the City consider and apply public financing districts?
14. How does the code deal with transitions between zoning intensity?
15. Are the proposed parking ratios appropriate? Should there be maximums in some cases? When should reductions be given?
16. Is there enough flexibility in landscaping standards? Do they encourage drought tolerance?
17. Are there flooding related issues to be discussed in the code?
18. Can we require the City to follow the code?
19. How can we increase collaboration and coordination with Texas State?

1 Patrick Rose provided a letter of resignation to Staff and the Think Tank members. Patrick stated
2 that his resignation from the Think Tank would become effective at the end of the meeting.
3 Patrick requested that Staff forward the letter to City Council and to Mayor Guerrero.

4 5 **Distribution and discussion of Think Tank Code Issue Exploration Process**

6
7 Abby Gillfillan provided an overview of the Code process and associated dates leading up the
8 Code adoption.

9
10 Kristy Stark presented and reviewed the *Think Tank Handbook* that was presented to the Think
11 Tank at the start of the Code SMTX process. Kristy further discussed the roles of Think Tank
12 members.

13
14 The Think Tank discussed the Code Issue Exploration Process, managing expectations within the
15 code, and discussed the Think Tank roles. The Think Tank explored methods for addressing
16 individual comments and framing the semantics of the draft code.

17
18 John David suggested continuing through the next couple of meetings with the current process in
19 order to test the Code Issue Exploration Process.

20
21 The Think Tank suggested naming the draft code “Initial Working Draft”.

22 23 **Next Steps**

24 25 **a. Future Agenda Items**

26
27 Abby presented the September 2, 2015 meeting topic: explore issues on the proposed
28 changes to conventional zoning districts and the process for re-zoning and re-
29 development within existing neighborhood areas. Abby explained that the topics during
30 the meeting discussion are derived from the following Discussion Topics:

- 31
32 2. Will PDD’s be allowed in the new code?
33 3. How are the existing conventional zoning districts changing
34 4. What is the process for future rezoning in neighborhoods?
35 11. What are the minimum acreage requirements for Character Based Zoning?
36

37 38 **b. Zoning for Character Workshops**

39
40 Abby presented a post card to the Think Tank that is being used to inform the public of
41 the upcoming Zoning for Character Workshops on August 19th and 20th.

42 43 **Questions from the press and public**

44
45 There were no questions from the press or public.

46 **Adjourn**

1 **Flex Time: Open office hours / time available for Think Tank to discuss items individually**
2 **with Staff**

3
4 **THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:24**
5 **P.M.**

6
7 _____
8 John David Carson, Chair Patrick Rose

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10 _____
11 Shawn DuPont Diann McCabe

12
13 _____
14 Chris Wood Sofia Nelson, Vice Chair

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16 _____
17 David Singleton Betsy Robertson

18
19 _____
20 Tom Wassenich

21
22 **ATTEST:**

23
24 _____
25 Andrea Villalobos, Planning Technician

1 Chair Carson requested a call for nominations for the vice-chair of the Think Tank. This
2 nomination is following the August 5, 2015 vice-chair resignation of Sofia Nelson.

3
4 A motion was made by Betsy Robertson to nominate David Singleton. The vote for appointment
5 was 3 - 0.

6 A motion was made by Diann McCabe to nominate Betsy Robertson. The vote for appointment
7 was 4 - 0

8
9 Betsy Robertson is appointed vice-chair of the Think Tank with a 4 - 0 vote.

10 11 **Discussion of Draft Review Process Summary**

12
13 Abby Gillfillan provided a summary presentation on the overview of the Think Tank review
14 process for Code SMTX. Abby presented two levels of consideration that can be used while
15 reviewing the document: level one, think tank as a committee, and level two, think tank as
16 technical experts.

17 18 **Issue Exploration – Zoning in Areas of Stability and Existing Neighborhoods**

19 20 **a. Zoning Translation Table**

21
22 Chair Carson commented that he would like to see office, manufactured, and
23 industrial districts have an expedited Preferred Scenario Amendment (PSA) process,
24 or for those districts to be able to apply that the PSA process directly.

25
26 Tom Wassenich provided concerns about areas of the city that abut existing
27 neighborhood areas of stability in the proposed plan.

28
29 Tom Wassenich expressed concern that the Transportation Master Plan has not been
30 completed. Abby Gillfillan commented that a draft of the Transportation Master Plan
31 will be provided so that the Think Tank can review and outline corridors within the
32 new Code SMTX. The topic will be discussed at a later date.

33
34 Diann McCabe requested that all definitions within the code be clearly defined. Abby
35 will update the “cheat sheet” of definitions so that it matches all terms on the
36 Proposed Translation Table.

37 38 **b. Character Based Districts in Areas of Stability and Existing Neighborhoods**

39
40 Tom Wassenich expressed concerns that new zoning options in existing
41 neighborhood areas will negatively affect the character of the neighborhood. Tom
42 continued to express that the code will need to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is
43 not easily changed.

44
45 Diann McCabe expressed that it is important to retain compatibility with the existing
46 neighborhood scale. She continued to express that if zoning is limited to CBD-4 or

1 below, it will help achieve the need for compatible housing with neighborhood scale.
2 Abby explained that new zoning districts will address scale and that an example has
3 been provided within the packet. Additionally, details of the Character Based District
4 (CBD) will be discussed during a future identified discussion topic.
5

6 Abby explained that Character Based Planning Areas will address transition through
7 designations of CBD-3, CBD-4, and CBD-5.
8

9 Betsy Robertson expressed that if the CBD-4 is written well, then it could help avoid
10 circumventing the Comprehensive Plan.
11

12 **c. Planned Development Districts**
13

14 Chris Wood expressed that removing PDDs could potentially threaten the ability for
15 development to be flexible and respond to the market.
16

17 David Singleton commented that without PDDs the process is more predictable.
18

19 The Think Tank expressed that many interests have been met by removing PDDs
20 from the code, including a simplified and more predictable process as well as being
21 less divisive for the community.
22

23 **d. Accessory Dwelling Unit**
24

25 Betsy Robertson suggested to have a definition for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)
26 that will allow for the ADU to be attached or detached from the main structure to
27 further provide diverse housing options.
28

29 David Singleton suggested that ADUs have a percentage of primary structure instead
30 of square footage to provide proportionality. Chair Carson suggested providing a
31 percentage range with a possible Conditional Use Permit process following the range.
32

33 Tom Wassenich expressed concerns over neighborhood change of character and
34 potential lack of oversight if ADUs are not owner-occupied. Tom requested that the
35 code require owner occupancy of one of the units on the lot.
36

37 John David Carson expressed concerns about requiring an additional parking space
38 for ADUs
39

40 **e. Conventional Districts Retired and Enhanced through Code SMTX**
41

42 Chris Wood expressed the importance of providing flexibility to development to react
43 to existing conditions. Chris further explained that certain design standards, such as
44 shrub requirements will need to be analyzed.
45

1 Betsy Robertson expressed concerns regarding energy efficiency due to restrictions
2 on geographical home orientation.
3

4 **Next Steps**

5
6 **a. Future Agenda Items**

7
8 Abby Gillfillan requested that all comments for Character Based Districts be inserted
9 into the Google Doc as soon as possible.
10

11 **b. September 30 Joint P&Z and City Council Workshop**

12
13 Abby Gillfillan requested that the Think Tank attend the September 30, 2015
14 workshop.
15

16 **Questions from the press and public**

17
18 There were no questions from the press or public.
19

20 **Adjourn**

21
22 **THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:25**
23 **P.M.**

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25 _____
26 John David Carson, Chair

27
28 _____
29 Shawn DuPont

Diann McCabe

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31 _____
32 Chris Wood

Sofia Nelson

33
34 _____
35 David Singleton

Betsy Robertson

36
37 _____
38 Tom Wassenich

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40 **ATTEST:**

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42 _____
43 Andrea Villalobos, Planning Technician

ZONING IN AREAS OF STABILITY AND EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

SEPTEMBER 2, 2015; ISSUE EXPLORATION

ZONING TRANSLATION TABLE

The Zoning Translation Table is a key implementation tool for Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Table is to translate the guiding principles for growth and development established through the Preferred Scenario Map into Zoning.

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

“The preferred scenario map does not explicitly address zoning. Land in the preferred scenario is divided into two broad categories. The first category includes intensity zones where change is anticipated by the plan. The second category includes areas of relative stability where changes in use are not recommended by the plan.” ... “Zoning is conservative in nature and has a bias towards maintaining the status quo. Growing cities, though, are not static; new residents move in, new businesses are established and new technologies change the way people live. The purpose of planning is to anticipate and shape this change in a way that provides opportunities for new development and redevelopment while preserving the community’s cultural and environmental heritage.”

Current Land Development Code Provisions

See LDC Section 4.1.5.2

The existing zoning translation table was implemented after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation tool. The table provides a direct translation from the preferred scenario to allowable zoning districts.

Initial Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Create a zoning tool that implements the guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan and provides opportunities for positive growth and change

See CodeSMTX Section 5.1.1.5

Zoning Translation Table Amendments include:

- An Intensity Classification System that allows for more flexibility in zoning requests
- The addition of Corridors and their allowable zoning districts
- A general policy statement that “Zoning requests may be made in the same or lower Intensity Classification”
- The addition of Character Based Districts that enable change in Intensity Areas
- The addition of more zoning options for Employment Centers

<p>TT Discussion/ Response</p>	<p>Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of stakeholder groups?</p> <p><u>Meets Interest</u></p> <p>The zoning translation table and 6 month waiting period upholds the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p><u>Unmet Interest</u></p> <p>The Waiting period for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment could be a barrier to providing jobs in Areas of Stability.</p>
<p>Brainstormed Solutions</p> <p>Zoning requests that are employment generators in Areas of Stability can skip the 6 month waiting period.</p>	
<p>Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy</p>	

New Zoning Options

Two different options for Character Based Zoning Districts have been provided in CodeSMTX and tailored for incorporation into Existing Neighborhood Areas and Areas of Stability.

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

“Being located in an area of stability does not mean that these areas should not or will not change. It means that any changes, whether new developments, zoning requests, or public improvements, should be carefully planned and implemented so that the character of the area remains.”

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 3

- Revise zoning code to allow for more diverse housing types and mixed-use development
- Update infill housing program
- Develop an affordable housing program

Current Land Development Code Provisions

Existing Neighborhood Areas (Infill):

The Existing Land Development Code does not currently have a zoning tool that provides for diversified housing types within Existing Neighborhood Areas. The mechanism that is used for this type of a development is a Planned Development District (PDD)

See Smartcode Section 3.3.1

Areas of Stability (New Development):

Smartcode zoning is available in areas of stability as an option for providing diverse and complete neighborhoods for properties greater than 40 acres.

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Existing Neighborhood Areas (Infill):

Development or redevelopment on parcels that are greater than either ½ of a block or 5 acres within existing neighborhood have the option of requesting a re-zoning to Character District 4 (CD-4). Character District 4 provides the flexibility needed for a larger development parcel while retaining compatibility with existing neighborhood scale. CD-4 includes:

- Primarily residential incorporating single family, duplex, rowhouses, small multifamily, live/work, and small commercial. Buildings are 2 to 3 stories

Areas of Stability (New Development):

Development on parcels greater than 20 acres has the option to request a Character Based Planning Area (CBPA) Zoning District in order to ensure that development

- The CBPA zoning consists of a complete community with a range of development types and streets. CBPA zoning allows the owner to submit a Regulating Plan to assign certain percentages of CD-3, CD-4, and CD-5.

<p>TT Discussion/ Response</p>	<p>Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of the stakeholder groups?</p> <p><u>Meets Interests</u></p> <p>If new zoning districts are written properly they could provide an option for diverse housing types that match the scale and character of the surrounding Existing Neighborhood Areas.</p> <p><u>Unmet Interest</u></p> <p>Existing Neighborhood Areas could be negatively affected by development that doesn't fit with the character</p>
<p>Brainstormed Solutions</p> <p>Establish Criteria to require transitions of Character Districts to require compatibility with any adjacent uses</p>	
<p>Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy</p>	

Planned Development Districts

Planned Development Districts are an overlay district with the purpose of providing an option for larger properties to develop as an integral unit for single or mixed uses that may include uses and standards that vary from the provision of other zoning districts.

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use Goal1: Direct growth, compatible with surrounding uses

Other CodeSMTX Re-write Goals:

Streamlining Development Process: PDD's frequently consist of drafting and negotiating an entirely new document that can take between 9 months and 2 years for approval.

Current Land Development Code Provisions

See Section 4.2.6.1 LDC

The current Land Development Code utilizes PDDs as a tool to achieve mixed use or larger scale development that doesn't fit within the existing San Marcos zoning categories. Currently PDD's

- Have the following minimum district size
 - Single Family/ Duplex/ Mixed Uses: 2 acres
 - Multi-family and Non-Residential: 1 acre
- Are required to achieve diversified housing and mixed use developments
- Are required to achieve a dense Multi-Family development
- May vary from any use or development standard within the LDC

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

CodeSMTX is replacing PDD's as an overlay district with the allowance for a CD-4 in Existing Neighborhood Areas.

CodeSMTX endeavors to draft zoning districts and standards that provide a balanced degree of flexibility and predictability so that long negotiated entitlement processes can be minimized. Character Based Planning provides the flexibility to accommodate a changing market and larger tracts of land while preserving development standards. The establishment of CD-4 within Existing Neighborhood Areas is proposed to :

- Have the following minimum district size:
 - Greater than 5 acres
 - Greater than 1/2 block
- Require a regulating plan to be included with the zoning change request.
- Follow all standards for a CD-4 district

<p>TT Discussion/ Response</p>	<p>Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of the stakeholder groups?</p> <p><u>Meets Interests</u></p> <p>Removal of negotiated PDD's provides a simpler and more predictable process that can be less divisive for the community.</p> <p><u>Unmet Interests</u></p>
<p>Brainstormed Solutions</p>	<p>Removing PDD's limits flexibility and the ability for development to respond to the market</p> <p>If a project puts too much pressure on the code without providing enough relief then people might try to change the code.</p>
<p>Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy</p>	

Accessory Dwelling Units

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 3

- Revise zoning code to allow for more diverse housing types and mixed-use development
- Update infill housing program
- Develop an affordable housing program

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 2: Housing opportunities for students of Texas State University in Appropriate Areas

- Revise development codes in Intensity Zones to allow and streamline the process for appropriate uses and densities
- Develop a plan to reduce congestion and parking issues caused near campus and in dense housing areas including options that integrate with existing university systems

Current Land Development Code Provisions

See Section 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.1.2

The Existing Land Development Code permits Accessory Dwelling Units under the following conditions:

- Accessory Dwelling Units are permitted in FD, AR, SF-R and Conditional in SF-11 and SF 6
- Accessory Dwelling Units are limited to 50% of the total floor area of the primary structure
- No additional parking space is required
- Accessory Dwelling Units must be located behind the Primary Structure

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

The Proposed Code Strategy permits Accessory Dwelling Units under the following conditions:

- Accessory Dwelling Units are permitted in FD, AR, SF-R, SF-6 and Conditional in SF 4.5, DR, and TH.
- Accessory Dwelling Units are limited to 625 Square Feet
- Require one additional parking space in the 3rd lot layer
- Accessory Dwelling Units must be located in the 3rd lot layer

<p>TT Discussion/ Response</p>	<p>Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of the stakeholder groups?</p> <p><u>Meets Interests</u></p> <p>Expands options for diverse and affordable housing</p> <p><u>Unmet Interests</u></p> <p>The scale and proportionality of an accessory unit to the main structure is more important than the maximum square feet</p>
<p>Brainstormed Solutions</p> <p>Make Definition of Accessory Dwelling Apply to attached or detached Unit</p> <p>Regulation of the size of an ADU should be proportional to the main structure</p> <p>Require Owner Occupancy of either the main building or the ADU</p>	<p>Requiring additional parking may lead to an excessive amount of parking</p> <p>Adding Density in the form of Accessory Dwelling Units to existing neighborhoods can negatively affect the character of those places</p>
<p>Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy</p>	

SEPTEMBER 16 - CHARACTER DISTRICT ISSUE EXPLORATION

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan envisioned Intensity Zones as “places where the City’s growing population can be accommodated in well planned areas where people can meet their daily needs within a short walk, bike, transit trip or drive.” These are areas of change where new zoning districts are required that provide the flexibility needed to adjust building types reflecting a changing market without compromising the character of the area as established through the Comprehensive Plan. The new zoning districts:

- Encourage density while requiring the infrastructure needed to support it
- Encourage a mixture of uses while requiring appropriate scale and form of development
- Encourage alternative street design and modes of transportation while requiring connectivity and complete streets

DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF NEW CHARACTER DISTRICTS

The table below provides a brief summary of the Proposed Character Districts. See the attachments for Images of Building Types; Lot Layers; and Yard Types

	CD3	CD4	CD5
<input type="checkbox"/> Lot Sizes	50’ Min – 120’ max	18’ Min - 75’ max	18’ Min
<input type="checkbox"/> Front Setback	15’ – 25’	6’ – 18’	0’
<input type="checkbox"/> Building types	Cottage; House; Estate; Civic	Cottage; House; Estate; Duplex; Rowhouse; Courtyard; Small Multifamily; Live/ Work; Mixed Use; Small Commercial; FlexCivic	Rowhouse; Small/ Large Multifamily; Live/Work; Mixed use; Small/ Large Commercial; Perimeter Building; Civic; Flex
<input type="checkbox"/> Yard Types	Edgeyard; Sideyard	Edgeyard; Sideyard; Rearyard	Sideyard; Rearyard; Courtyard
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking Location	Uncovered – 2 nd or 3 rd layer Covered – 3 rd	3 rd Layer- Residential 2 nd Layer - Commercial	3 rd Layer
<input type="checkbox"/> Driveway	Any layer (except where an alley or secondary street is available) – 10’ max	Any layer (except where an alley or secondary street is available); Residential – 10’; Commercial – 24’	Any Layer (except where an alley or secondary street is available) – 24’ max
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses	Detached Residential	Detached and Attached Residential; Office(ground floor); Retail (limited to ground floor corners); Lodging (limited to 12 Beds Max)	Attached Residential; Lodging; Office; Retail

1) THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN A CHARACTER DISTRICT

CodeSMTX is proposing a streamlined development process in Intensity Zones where an applicant is proposing to meet all code requirements

- Step 1 – Achieve Zoning of a Character District through a re-zoning application where available by the Zoning Translation Table – City Council
- Step 2 – Develop a Regulating Plan that demonstrates compliance with all requirements of the Code - Administrative

- Step 3 – (Optional) When Specific Adjustments or Conditional Use Permits are requested the regulating plan and documented requests are submitted as part of the regulating plan approval – Planning Commission
- Step 5 – Submit a Watershed Protection Plan (if required), Public Improvements Plans (if required) and a Preliminary or Final Plat – Quasi- Judicial or Administrative
- Step 6 – Submit Site Development Permits for any commercial or Multi-Family Projects - Administrative
- Step 7 – Submit for Building Permits - Administrative

2) EMPLOYMENT AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL WITHIN CHARACTER DISTRICTS

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Intensity Matrix indicates that light industrial would be permitted through a CUP process for New Development in Intensity Zones and not recommended in Downtown or Midtown. CodeSMTX proposes to apply this provision in the following way

- In Character Based Planning Areas (over 20 acres) Light Industrial uses can be approved with a Conditional Use Permit as part of the regulating plan approval process. If special development standards are required those would be permitted through a zoning change process requesting a Special District
- Flex Buildings have been included as an allowable building type within Character Districts 4 and 5. This building type would be required to meet the lot dimensions of the District.

3) ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS IN CHARACTER DISTRICTS

The Downtown Architectural Standards in Article 6 of the SmartCode are proposed to be continued for Downtown and certain sections are proposed to be expanded to other CD-5 zoned property

- Contextual Height Step Downs from sensitive sites Vertical and Horizontal Expression Requirements, and varied upper floor massing are required for larger buildings to limit massing. CodeSMTX is proposing to expand these requirements to other Character Districts 4 and 5.
- The Upper Floor Window Design Requirements and the Design Guidelines are proposed to be applicable downtown only.

Conventional District Changes

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use Goal 2: High-Density Mixed-Use development and infrastructure in the Activity Nodes and Intensity Zones, including the downtown area supporting walkability and integrated transit corridors

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 4: Well maintained, stable neighborhoods protected from blight or the encroachment on incompatible land uses

Transportation Goal 1

- Determine appropriate modes of transportation in and around new developments, subdivisions, site plans, the University and high density residential areas

Current Land Development Code Provisions

Currently all conventional zoning districts are primarily use based and suburban auto-oriented including Medium and High Density residential districts

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

CodeSMTX is proposing to modify those zoning districts that require more parking, are higher density, and are typically located in transitional areas. Changes to Conventional districts include

- Updated standards in DR, TH, and NC districts that include the following:
 - Parking in the 2nd layer for NC and 3rd layer for DR, and TH districts
 - Limitation of Driveway size and location
 - Frontage Type specifications
 - Modifications to setbacks and landscaping standards to accommodate parking location
- The retirement of the MF-12, MF-18, and MF-24 districts. New High Density Multi-Family development is required to locate in Character District-5 within Intensity Zones.

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of the stakeholder groups?

Unmet Interests

Addition of architectural/ design standards in Conventional Districts unduly limits creativity of architects and limits potential energy efficiency through solar orientation.

TT Discussion/ Response

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

CHARACTER DISTRICTS

SEPTEMBER 16, 2015; ISSUE EXPLORATION

The Development Process

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal #2: “Revise development codes in Intensity Zones to allow and streamline the process for appropriate uses and densities”

Current Code Provisions

Smartcode (SC) zoning is achieved for properties greater than 40 acres. If no deviations are proposed the request is heard as a straight zoning change with no negotiations.

- Deviations that meet the intent of the code are called warrants and may be approved by the P&Z.
- Deviations from standards that do not meet intent are variances and are heard by the ZBOA and must meet hardship criteria.

Initial Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Character Districts greater than 20 acres are Character Based Planning Areas. Character districts between 5 acres or ½ block and 20 acres are individual districts. Both are achieved through straight zoning.

- Deviations from standards are specific adjustments. Specific Adjustments:
 - Are identified specifically as an option in the code
 - Approved by the Planning Commission
 - Have criteria for review included in the code
- Deviations from uses are Conditional Use Permits. Conditional Use Permits:
 - Are identified as conditional on the Land Use Matrix in each zoning district
 - Approved by the Planning Commission

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of stakeholder groups?

TT Discussion/ Response

Brainstormed Solutions

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Employment and Light Industrial

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

The Land Use Intensity Matrix indicates that light industrial would be permitted through a CUP process for New Development in Intensity Zones and not recommended in Downtown or Midtown.

Current Code Provisions

Manufacturing on the ground floor is permitted by Warrant in T5

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

- Light Industrial is a Conditional Use in Character District 5
- Special Districts are available within a Character Based Planning Area and require approval through City Council following a zoning change process

TT Discussion/ Response

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of the stakeholder groups?

Brainstormed Solutions

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Architectural Standards

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal #2: “Revise development codes in Intensity Zones to allow and streamline the process for appropriate uses and densities”

Current Code Provisions

Currently the following Architectural and Design Standards are in place Downtown:

- Full masonry on all Multi-Family projects
- Contextual Height Step-Downs
- Expression Requirements
- Upper Floor Window Design
- Varied Upper Floor Massing
- Ground floor residential is required to be elevated 2’ above the sidewalk
- 70% min clear glazing is required for all shop front frontages
- 30% min clear glazing required for all other frontage types

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

CodeSMTX is proposing to continue all of these requirements in Downtown

CodeSMTX is proposing to expand the following standards to other CD-4 and CD-5 Districts:

- Contextual Height Step-Downs
- Expression Requirements
- Varied Upper Floor Massing
- Ground floor residential is required to be elevated 2’ above the sidewalk in CD-5
- 70% min clear glazing is required for all shop front frontages
- 30% min clear glazing required for all other frontage types

TT Discussion/ Response

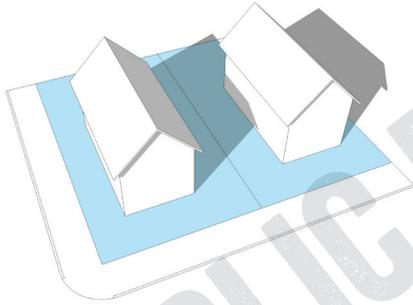
Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals and the interests of the stakeholder groups?

Brainstormed Solutions

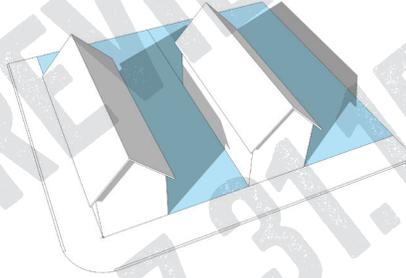
Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

TABLE 5.2.8.11A (YARD TYPES)**EDGEYARD**

A lot where a building occupies the center of its lot with setbacks on all sides. This is the least urban of types as the front yard sets back from the frontage.

**SIDEYARD**

A lot where the building occupies one side of the lot with the setback to the other side. A shallow frontage setback defined a more urban condition.

**REARYARD**

A lot where the building occupies the full frontage, leaving the rear of the lot as the sole yard. This is a very urban types as the continuous façade defines the public frontage/ realm.

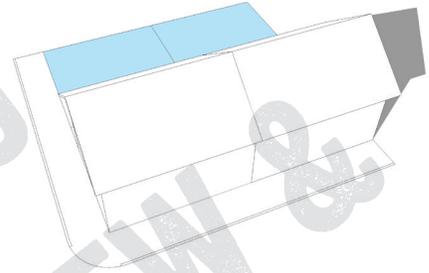


ILLUSTRATION 5.2.8.11 SETBACKS

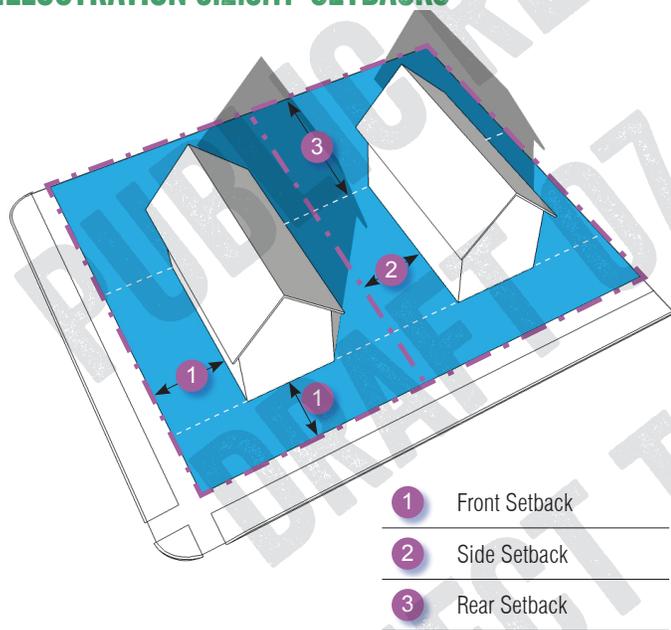


ILLUSTRATION 5.2.8.10 LOT LAYERS

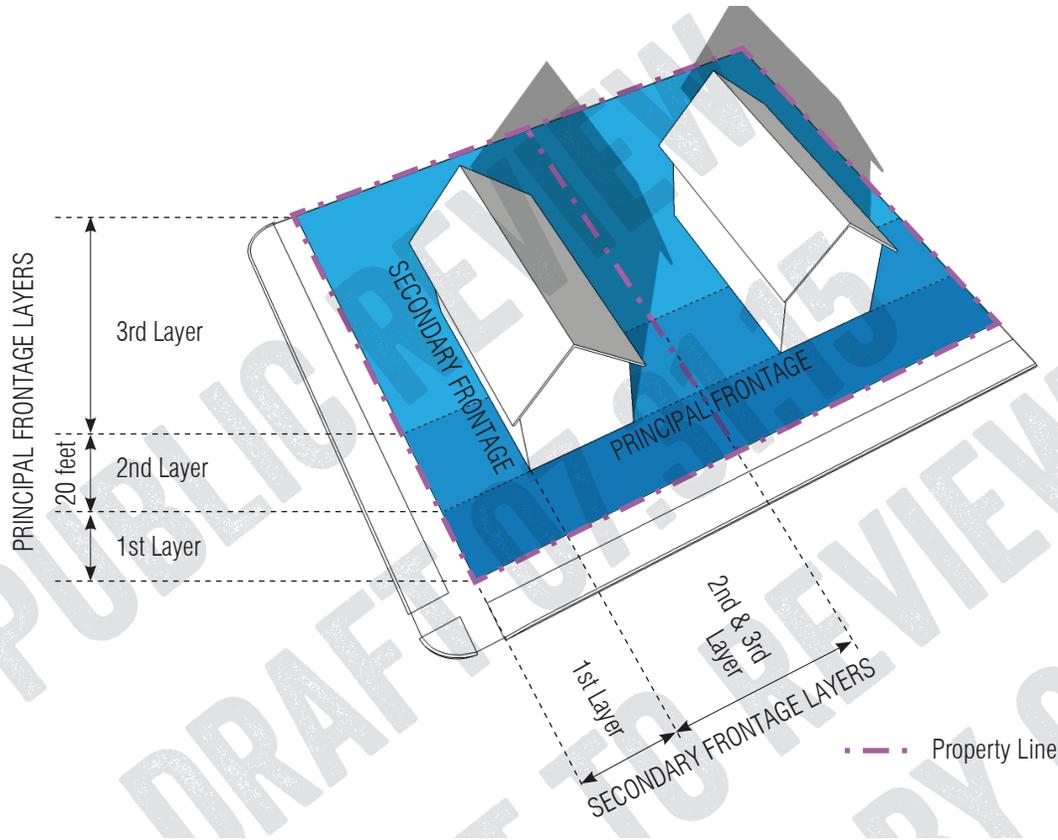


ILLUSTRATION 5.2.8.11E FRONTAGE AND LOT LINES

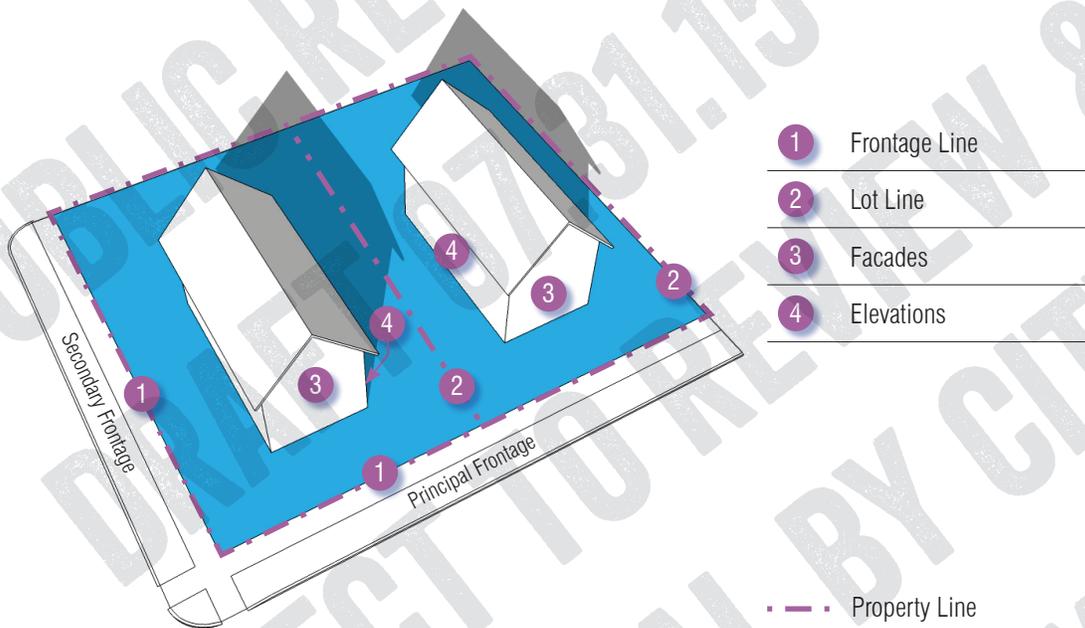
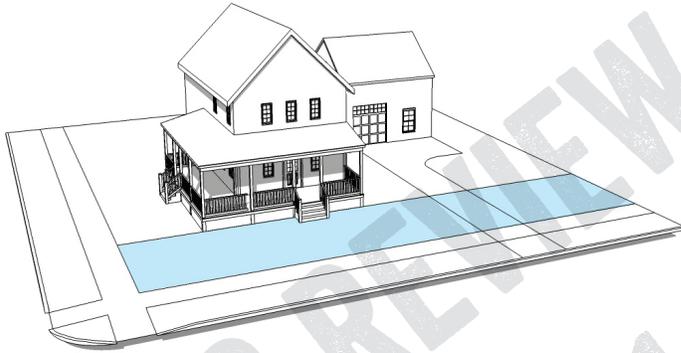


TABLE 5.2.8.11D PRIVATE FRONTAGE TYPES - SPECIFIC

Common Yard	Permitted	CBD-2	CBD-3	
	Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D



A planted Frontage wherein the Facade is set back substantially from the Frontage Line. The front yard created remains unfenced and is visually continuous with adjacent yards, supporting a common landscape. The deep Setback provides a buffer from the higher speed Thoroughfares.

Porch	Permitted	CBD-2	CBD-3	
	Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D



A planted Frontage wherein the Facade is set back from the Frontage Line with an attached porch or stoop permitted to Encroach. This may be used with or without a fence to maintain street spatial definition. Porches shall be no less than 8 feet deep.

Terrace/Lightwell	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A Frontage where the Facade is set back from the Frontage line by an elevated landing and a sunken Lightwell. This type buffers residential, retail or service uses from urban sidewalks and allows for activation of below grade space.

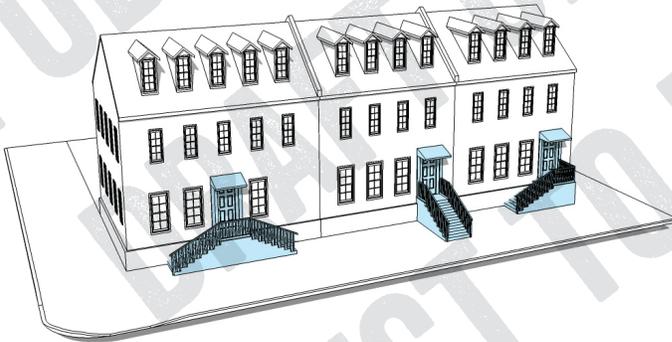
TABLE 5.2.8.11D PRIVATE FRONTAGE TYPES - SPECIFIC

Forecourt	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
		CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A Frontage wherein a portion of the Facade is close to the Frontage Line and the central portion is set back. The Forecourt creates an intimate gathering space for the residents or additional shopping or restaurant seating area within retail and service areas. This type should be used sparingly and may be allocated in conjunction with other Frontage types.

Stoop	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
		CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A Frontage wherein the Facade is aligned close to the Frontage Line with the first Story elevated from the Sidewalk sufficiently to secure privacy for the windows. The entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing. This type is recommended for ground-floor Residential use.

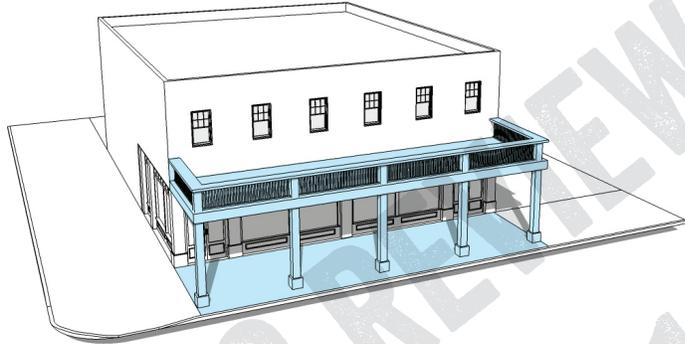
Shopfront	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
		CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A Frontage wherein the Facade is aligned close to or at the Frontage Line with the building entrance at Sidewalk grade. This type is conventional for Retail or Hospitality use. It has a substantial glazing on the Sidewalk level and may include an awning that may over-lap the sidewalk.

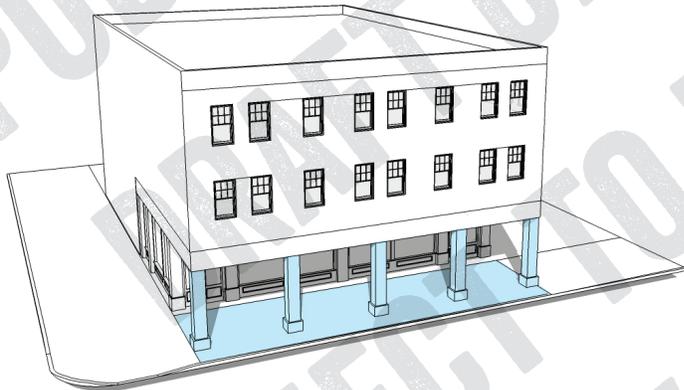
TABLE 5.2.8.11D PRIVATE FRONTAGE TYPES - SPECIFIC

Gallery	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



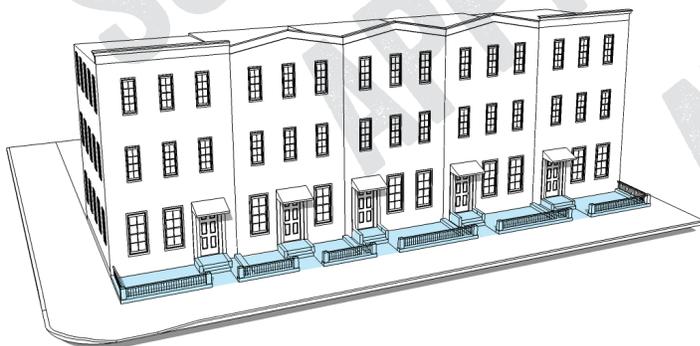
A Frontage wherein the Façade is aligned close to the Frontage line with an attached cantilevered shed or a lightweight colonnade. This type is intended for buildings with ground floor commercial or retail uses and the Gallery may be one or two stories.

Arcade	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A colonnade supporting habitable space where the façade is set back from the frontage line and the arcade meets the sidewalk.

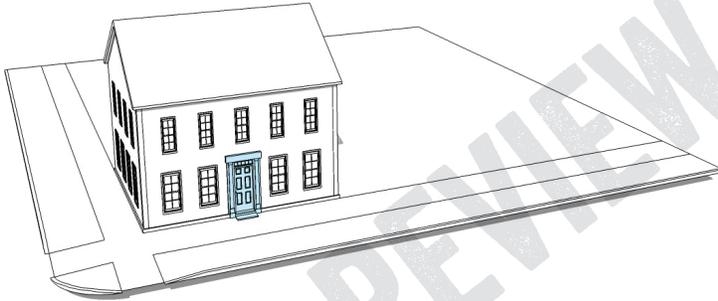
Dooryard	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A frontage type where the main façade of the building is set back a small distance and the frontage line is defined by a low wall, decorative fence or hedge, creating a small dooryard. The dooryard shall not provide public circulation along a ROW. The dooryard may be raised, sunken, or at grade and is intended for ground-floor residential.

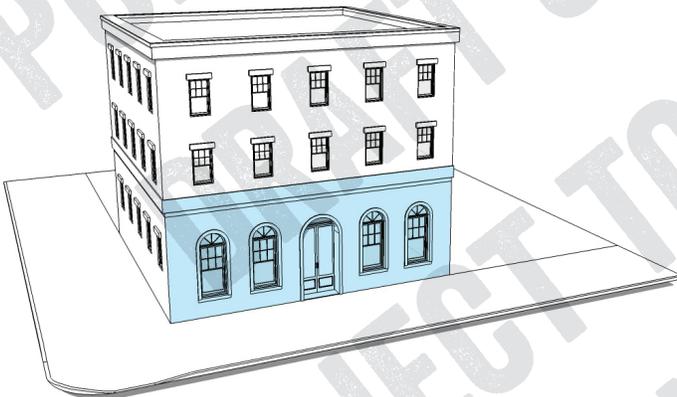
TABLE 5.2.8.11D PRIVATE FRONTAGE TYPES - SPECIFIC

Doorway	Permitted	CBD-3	CBD-4	CBD-4C
	Districts:	CBD-4D	CBD-5	CBD-5C CBD-5D



A frontage type where the main façade of the building is at or set back a small distance from the frontage line. The vestibule typically provides an at grade entry.

Officefront	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



A Frontage wherein the Facade is aligned close to or at the Frontage Line with the building entrance at Sidewalk grade. This type is conventional for Retail or Hospitality use. It has a substantial glazing on the Sidewalk level and may include an awning that may over-lap the sidewalk.

TABLE 5.2.8.11F BUILDING TYPES - SUMMARY

Building Type		Permitted Districts
	<p>COTTAGE: A detached building having an Edgeyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the backyard. This building type typically incorporates a single residential unit.</p>	<p>CBD-2, CBD-3, CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D</p>
	<p>HOUSE: A detached building having an Edgeyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the backyard. This building type typically incorporates a single residential unit.</p>	<p>CBD-2, CBD-3, CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D</p>
	<p>ESTATE: A large detached Building having an Edgeyard or Sideyard yard type that may be with one or more Accessory Building in the backyard. This building type typically incorporates a single residential unit.</p>	<p>CBD-2, CBD-3, CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D</p>
	<p>DUPLEX: A small to medium sized building that consists of two attached units, with separate entrances at least one of which faces the street. Both of the units, side-by-side, front to back or over-and-under, are contained within a single building massing. This building type sits on a small to medium sized urban lot having an Edgeyard or Sideyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the backyard.</p>	<p>CBD-3, CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D,</p>
	<p>ROWHOUSE: A collection of very narrow to medium sized attached buildings with a Rearyard yard type (or Sideyard as an end unit) that consists of side-by-side units with individual entries facing the street. This type shares a party wall with another of the same type and occupies the full Frontage Line.</p>	<p>CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>SMALL MULTIFAMILY: A Building with an Edgeyard, Sideyard and Rearyard yard type that consists of side-by-side and/or horizontally stacked units, typically with one or more shared entries. This building type may have the appearance of a medium to large size family home.</p>	<p>CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>LARGE MULTIFAMILY: A Building with an Edgeyard, Sideyard and Rearyard yard type that consists of side-by-side and/or horizontally stacked units, typically with one or more shared entries.</p>	<p>CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>

TABLE 5.2.8.11F BUILDING TYPES - SUMMARY

Building Type		Permitted Districts
	<p>LIVE/WORK: A small to medium-sized attached or detached structure that consists of a flexible space used for artisan, studio, service, or retail uses, and a residential unit above and/or behind. Both the flex space and the residential unit are internally connected and occupied by a single entity. This type is appropriate for providing affordable and flexible mixed-use space for incubating neighborhood-serving retail and service uses, artists and other craftspeople.</p>	<p>CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>MIXED-USE: A typically attached building that provides a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses designed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail, hospitality or service uses on the ground floor, with upper floors typically designed for residential or office uses.</p>	<p>CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>SMALL COMMERCIAL: A typically attached building that provides a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses designed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail, hospitality or service uses on the ground floor, with upper floors typically designed for residential or office uses.</p>	<p>CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>LARGE COMMERCIAL: A typically attached building that provides a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses designed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail, hospitality or service uses on the ground floor, with upper floors typically designed for residential or office uses.</p>	<p>CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>PERIMETER BUILDING: A Building that is always associated with and lines a Parking Structure. It may include Parking, Residential, Office and/or other Principal Functions allowed in the applicable Character Based District.</p>	<p>CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>CIVIC: A medium to large sized attached or detached building designed to stand apart from its surroundings due to the specialized nature of its public or quasi-public function for public assembly and activity. Examples include libraries, churches, courthouses, schools, centers of government, performing arts, and museums. They are often the most prominently sited and architecturally significant structures in a community.</p>	<p>CBD-2, CBD-3, CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>
	<p>FLEX: A medium to large sized building built on a large lot that may incorporate structured parking underground. It is designed to accommodate a vertical mix of uses with ground-floor retail, service, or industrial uses and upper-floor service, office or residential uses; or may be a single-use building, typically retail, industrial, or service, where ground floor retail is not appropriate.</p>	<p>CBD-4, CBD-4C, CBD-4D, CBD-5, CBD-5C, CBD-5D</p>

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-1 BUILDING TYPES

Cottage	Permitted	CBD-2	CBD-3
	Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C CBD-4D



(a) General Description

A detached building having an Edgeyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the backyard. This building type typically incorporates a single residential unit.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 1 max

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Doorway	P

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:
2 stories max

MAIN BODY:
Width 40 ft max

(f) Pedestrian Access

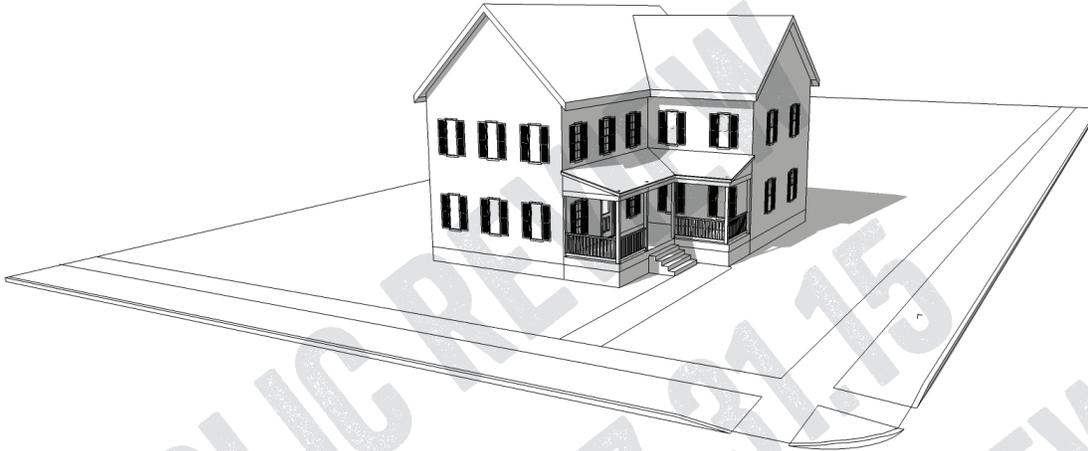
Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-2 BUILDING TYPES

House	Permitted Districts:	CBD-2	CBD-3
		CBD-4	CBD-4C CBD-4D



(a) General Description

A detached building having an Edgeyard or Sideyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the backyard. This building type typically incorporates a single residential unit.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 1 max

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Doorway	P

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:	2 stories max
MAIN BODY:	Width 48' max

(f) Pedestrian Access

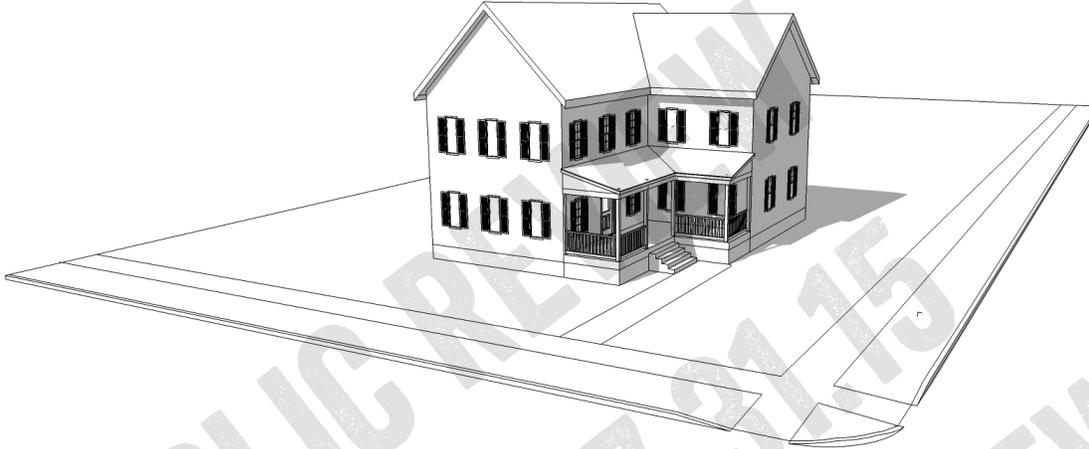
Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-3 BUILDING TYPES

Estate House	Permitted	CBD-2	CBD-3
	Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C CBD-4D



(a) General Description

A large, detached building having an Edgeyard or Sideyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the backyard.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 1 max

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Doorway	P

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:
2 stories max

MAIN BODY:
Width Per Character Based District Lot Width and Side Setback Standards

(f) Pedestrian Access

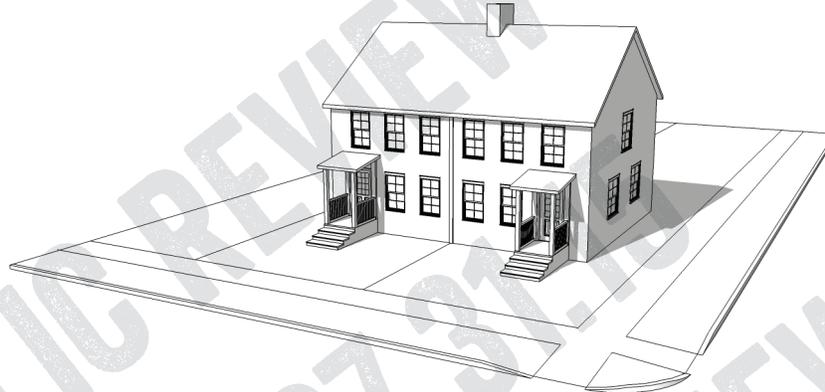
Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-4 BUILDING TYPES

Duplex	Permitted Districts:	CBD-3	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D



(a) General Description

A small to medium sized building that consists of two attached units, with separate entrances at least one of which faces the street. Both of the units are contained within a single building massing. This building type sits on a small to medium sized urban lot having an Edgeward or Sideyard yard type that may be shared with an accessory structure in the back-yard.

(b) Lot

Width	Per Character Based District Lot Width
-------	--

(c) Number of Units

Units per building	2 min/ max.
--------------------	-------------

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Doorway	P

¹ Only one frontage type shall be used, but the frontage type may be duplicated for each unit entry.

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

2 stories max

MAIN BODY:

Width	48' max
-------	---------

(f) Pedestrian Access

Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

At least one unit shall have an individual entry on the primary frontage.

¹On corner lots, one of the unit entry may front on the secondary frontage.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-5 BUILDING TYPES

Rowhouse	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



(a) General Description

A collection of very narrow to medium sized attached buildings with a Rearyard yard type (or Sideyard as an end unit) that consists of side-by-side units with individual entries facing the street. This type shares a party wall with another of the same type and occupies the full Frontage Line.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per Rowhouse 1 max.
 Number of Rowhouses connected to other Rowhouses 3 min. - 10 max.

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Dooryard	P
Doorway	P
Terrace/Lightwell*	P

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:
 3 stories max
MAIN BODY:
 Width per rowhouse 12' min. - 36' max.

(f) Pedestrian Access

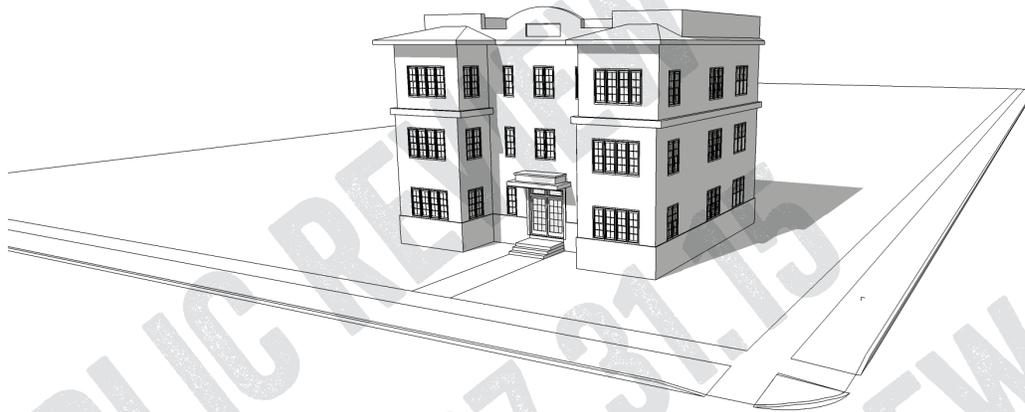
Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-6 BUILDING TYPES

Small Multi-Family	Permitted	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



(a) General Description

A Building with an Edgeyard and Sideyard yard type that consists of side-by-side and/or horizontally stacked units, typically with one or more shared entries. This building type may have the appearance of a medium to large size family home.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 3 min- 6 max.

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Forecourt	P
Dooryard	P
Doorway	P
Terrace/Lightwell* ¹	P

¹ Only allowed in situations where the slope prevents at grade entry of the building.

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

3 stories max

MAIN BODY:

Width 48' max

(f) Pedestrian Access

Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

(h) Additional Standards

Must comply with materials standards of Multifamily Development Standards, [Chapter 5, Article 4, Division 2](#).

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-7 BUILDING TYPES

Large Multi-Family Permitted Districts: **CBD-5** **CBD-5C** **CBD-5D**



(a) General Description

A Building with an Edgeyard, Sideyard and Rearyard yard type that consists of side-by-side and/or horizontally stacked units, typically with one or more shared entries.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 7 min.

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Porch	P
Stoop	P
Forecourt	P
Dooryard	P
Doorway	P
Terrace/Lightwell*	P

* Only allowed in situations where the slope prevents at grade entry of the building.

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

Per Character Based District Height Standards

MAIN BODY:

Per Character Based District Lot Width and Side Setback Standards

(f) Pedestrian Access

Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

(h) Additional Standards

Multifamily Building types must comply with material standards of Multifamily Development Standards, [Chapter 5, Article 4, Division 2](#).

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-8 BUILDING TYPES

Live/Work	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
	Districts:	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



** Illustration of 3 adjoining Live/Work Units*

(a) General Description

A small to medium-sized attached or detached structure that consists of a flexible space used for artisan, studio, service, or retail uses, and a residential unit above and/or behind. Both the flex space and the residential unit are internally connected and occupied by a single entity. This type is appropriate for providing affordable and flexible mixed-use space for incubating neighborhood-serving retail and service uses, artists and other craftspeople.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 2 including 1 residential and 1 flex space

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Stoop	P
Dooryard	P
Doorway	P
Terrace/Lightwell*1	P
Shopfront	P
Officefront	P

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

2 stories max

MAIN BODY:

Width 18' min. - 36' max.

(f) Pedestrian Access

Main Entrance Location Primary Frontage

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-9 BUILDING TYPES

Mixed-Use	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
		CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



(a) General Description

A typically attached building that provides a vertical mix of uses designed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail, hospitality or service uses on the ground floor, with upper floors typically designed for residential or office uses.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 2 min, including 1 residential and 1 non-residential; 4 max, including no more than 2 residential and 2 non-residential

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Stoop	P	Shopfront	P
Forecourt	P	Terrace	P
Dooryard	P	Officefront	P
Doorway	P	Gallery ¹	P
Terrace/Lightwell*	P	Arcade ¹	P

¹ Only allowed in situations where the slope prevents at grade entry of the building.

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

Per Character Based District Height Standards

MAIN BODY:

Per Character Based District Lot Width and Side Setback Standards

(f) Pedestrian Access

Ground Floor Units Primary Frontage
 Upper Floors Units Primary or Secondary Frontage
 Upper floors units shall be accessed by a common entry.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

(h) Additional Standards

Must comply with materials standards of Multifamily Development Standards, Chapter 5, Article 4, Division 2

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-10 BUILDING TYPES

Small Commercial	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
		CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



(a) General Description

A typically attached building that provides a vertical mix of uses designed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail, hospitality or service uses on the ground floor, with upper floors typically designed for residential or office uses.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 2 min., which may be residential or non-residential

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Stoop	P	Shopfront	P
Forecourt	P	Terrace	P
Dooryard	P	Officefront	P
Doorway	P	Gallery ¹	P
Terrace/Lightwell*	P	Arcade ¹	P

¹ Only allowed in situations where the slope prevents at grade entry of the building.

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

Per Character Based District Standards in Section ____

MAIN BODY:

Per Character Based District Standards in Section ____

(f) Pedestrian Access

Ground Floor Units Primary Frontage
 Upper Floors Units Primary or Secondary Frontage
 Upper floors units shall be accessed by a common entry.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-11 BUILDING TYPES

Large Commercial Permitted Districts: **CBD-5 CBD-5C CBD-5D**



(a) General Description

A typically attached building that provides a vertical mix of uses designed to facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail, hospitality or service uses on the ground floor, with upper floors typically designed for residential or office uses.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 2 min, which may be residential or non-residential

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Stoop	P	Shopfront	P
Forecourt	P	Terrace	P
Dooryard	P	Officefront	P
Doorway	P	Gallery ¹	P
Terrace/Lightwell*	P	Arcade ¹	P

¹ Only allowed in situations where the slope prevents at grade entry of the building.

¹ May only be used in combination with a Shopfront or Officefront Frontage Type

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

Per Character Based District Standards in Section _____

MAIN BODY:

Per Character Based District Standards in Section _____

(f) Pedestrian Access

Ground Floor Units Primary Frontage
 Upper Floors Units Primary or Secondary Frontage
 Upper floors units shall be accessed by a common entry.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-12 BUILDING TYPES

Perimeter Building Permitted Districts: **CBD-5** **CBD-5C** **CBD-5D**



(a) General Description

A Building that is always associated with and lines a Parking Structure. It may include Parking, Residential, Office and/or other Principal Functions allowed in the applicable Character Based District.

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Units per building 2 min, which may be residential or non-residential

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Stoop	P	Officefront	P
Dooryard	P	Gallery ¹	P
Terrace/Lightwell*	P	Arcade ¹	P
Shopfront	P		

* Only allowed in situations where slope prevents at-grade entry of building

¹ May only be used in combination with a Shopfront or Officefront Frontage type.

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

Per Character Based District Height Standards

The Parking Structure shall not be more than two stories above the height of the Perimeter Building.

MAIN BODY:

Width	Minimum - Entire width of the Parking Structure at the Frontage
Depth	20' min.

(f) Pedestrian Access

Ground Floor Units	Primary Frontage
Upper Floors Units	Primary or Secondary Frontage

Ground floor units may have individual entries along the front street or side street.

Secondary access for units may be directly from the parking structure.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-13 BUILDING TYPES

Civic	Permitted Districts:	CBD-2	CBD-3	CBD-4	CBD-4C
		CBD-4D	CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



(a) General Description

A medium to large sized attached or detached building designed to stand apart from its surroundings due to the specialized nature of its public or quasi-public function for public assembly and activity. Examples include libraries, churches, courthouses, schools, centers of government, performing arts, and museums. They are often the most prominently sited and architecturally significant structures in a community.

(b) Lot

Width NA

(c) Number of Units

NA

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

NA

(e) Building Size and Massing

The Front Setback of Civic Buildings in any Character Based District shall be between 0 and that number of feet which is equal to 50% of the depth of the Lot.

HEIGHT:

Up to 1 story higher than Height allowed for non-Civic Buildings in applicable Character Based Districts.

(e) Building Size and Massing

The height of Civic Buildings shall be limited to one additional story above the maximum allowed height in the applicable Character Based District, plus the architectural elements described in _____

MAIN BODY:

Width Not regulated

Depth Not regulated

(f) Pedestrian Access

Ground Floor Units Primary Frontage

Upper Floors Units Primary or Secondary Frontage

Civic buildings are not subject to the requirements of Section _____ with regard to building form, lot occupation and building placement. They are also not subject to the requirements of Section _____ (Specific to Frontage Types).

The design and form of Civic Buildings shall be determined after consultation with the Planning Department, consideration and recommendation of the Planning Board and approved by the City Council.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

TABLE 5.2.8.11G-14 BUILDING TYPES

Flex	Permitted Districts:	CBD-4	CBD-4C	CBD-4D
		CBD-5	CBD-5C	CBD-5D



(a) General Description

A medium to large sized building built on a large lot that may incorporate structured parking underground. It is designed to accommodate a vertical mix of uses with ground-floor retail, service, or industrial uses and upper-floor service, office or residential uses; or may be a single-use building, typically retail, industrial, or service, where ground floor retail is not appropriate

(b) Lot

Width Per Character Based District Lot Width

(c) Number of Units

Unrestricted

(d) Allowed Frontage Types

Shopfront

Officefront

(e) Building Size and Massing

HEIGHT:

Minimum as allowed in applicable Character Based District; 3 stories max.

MAIN BODY:

Width 150' max.

(f) Pedestrian Access

Ground Floor Units	Primary Frontage
Upper Floors Units	Primary or Secondary Frontage

Ground floor units may have individual entries along the front street or side street.

(g) Vehicle Access and Parking

Parking may be accessed from an alley, side street or front street.

ARTICLE 6. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

6.1. INSTRUCTIONS

6.1.1. Applicability

- a. Lots and buildings located within Downtown San Marcos as defined by the Design Contexts Map in the Downtown Design Guidelines Appendix to this Code and governed by this Code shall be subject to the requirements of this Article.

6.2. CONTEXTUAL HEIGHT STEP DOWN REQUIREMENT

6.2.1. SPECIFIC TO ZONES T4, T5

- a. A step down in height is required for all buildings adjacent to a Sensitive Site.
- b. A maximum height of three stories is permitted within 25 feet of a side property line adjoining a Sensitive Site.
- c. A maximum height of three stories is permitted within 12 feet of a front property line across the street from a Sensitive Site.
- d. The Development Review Committee may administratively approve an alternative method for meeting the step down requirement provided the request meets the criteria established in the Downtown Design Guidelines.

TABLE 6.1 CONTEXTUAL HEIGHT STEP DOWN

The following table illustrates the two contextual height step down requirements.

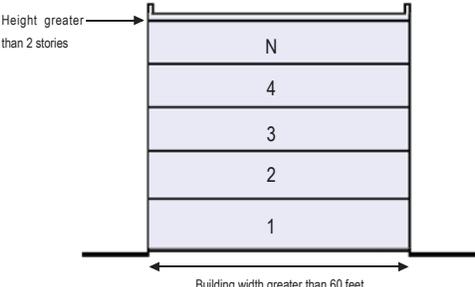
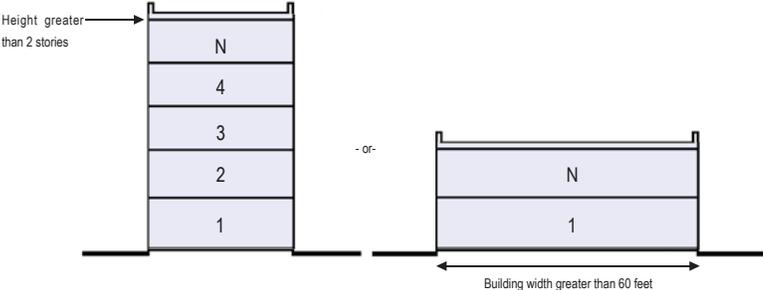
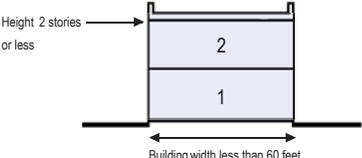
<p>a. Side adjacency: A maximum height of three stories is permitted within 25 ft. of a side property line adjoining a Sensitive Site.</p>	
<p>b. Across street: A maximum height of three stories is permitted within 12 ft. of a front property line across the street from a Sensitive Site.</p>	

6.3. EXPRESSION REQUIREMENTS

6.3.1. SPECIFIC TO ZONES T4, T5

- 6.3.2. A minimum number of expression tools shall be applied as specified below and in Tables 6.2 and 6.3, and as illustrated in Table 6.4.
- a. Condition A, buildings with a facade width greater than 60 feet **AND** a height greater than 2 stories:
 - i. A minimum of two horizontal expression tools is required.
 - ii. At least one vertical expression tool is required.
 - b. Condition B, buildings with a facade width greater than 60 feet **OR** a height greater than 2 stories:
 - i. A minimum of three expression tools shall be used.
 - c. Condition C, buildings with a facade width of 60 feet or less and a height of 2 stories or less:
 - i. A minimum of two expression tools shall be used.
 - d. The DRC may administratively approve alternative expression tools provided the minimum number for the Condition is met and the request meets the criteria established in the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- 6.3.3. Any combinations of the wall notch, wall offset and vertical expression line alternatives shall count as only one expression alternative.
- 6.3.4. Vertical expressions shall be applied across the entire height of the facade.

TABLE 6.2 EXPRESSION REQUIREMENT CONDITIONS

<p>CONDITION A</p> 
<p>CONDITION B</p> 
<p>CONDITION C</p> 

ARTICLE 6. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

San Marcos, Texas

TABLE 6.3 EXPRESSION REQUIREMENTS

The following table outlines the expression tool requirements based on building facade width and height.

CONDITION A		CONDITION B	CONDITION C
Facade width > 60 ft. and building height > 2 stories		Facade width > 60 ft. or building height > 2 stories	Facade width ≤ 60 ft. and building height ≤ 2 stories
Select a minimum of two alternatives	Select a minimum of one alternative	Select a minimum of three alternatives	Select a minimum of two alternatives

Horizontal Expression Tools

<p>a. Varied Parapet Height*: An offset in parapet height of at least 2 ft. at a minimum of every 60 ft. in building width.</p> <p>*The varied parapet height tool provides both horizontal and vertical articulation</p>		T4 T5				
<p>b. Canopy: Canopies or awnings which run across the full width of fenestrations on the first floor facade.</p>		T4 T5				
<p>c. Second Floor Expression Line: A line prescribed at a certain level of a building for the major part of the width of a facade, expressed by a variation in material or by a limited projection such as a molding or balcony.</p>		T4 T5				
<p>d. Cornice: A cornice detail of at least 18 in. height and 6" in depth for the entire width of the front facade.</p>		T4 T5				

Vertical Expression Tools

<p>e. Wall Notch: A front facade setback of a minimum depth of 4 ft. and length of 8 ft. at a minimum interval of every 60 ft. across the building frontage.</p>		T4 T5				
<p>f. Vertical Expression Line: A vertical line expressed by a substantial change in material or vertical molding with a minimum size of at least 4 in. depth and 12 in. width, at a minimum interval of every 60 ft. across the building facade.</p>		T4 T5				
<p>g. Wall Offset: Facade modules of a maximum length of 60 ft. with a minimum of a 4 ft. offset from an adjacent module.</p>		T4 T5				

TABLE 6.4 EXPRESSION TOOLS

The following table illustrates the alternative expression tools.

Vertical Expression Tools

a. Varied Parapet Height: An offset in parapet height of at least 2 ft. spaced at a minimum of every 60 ft. across the building frontage.



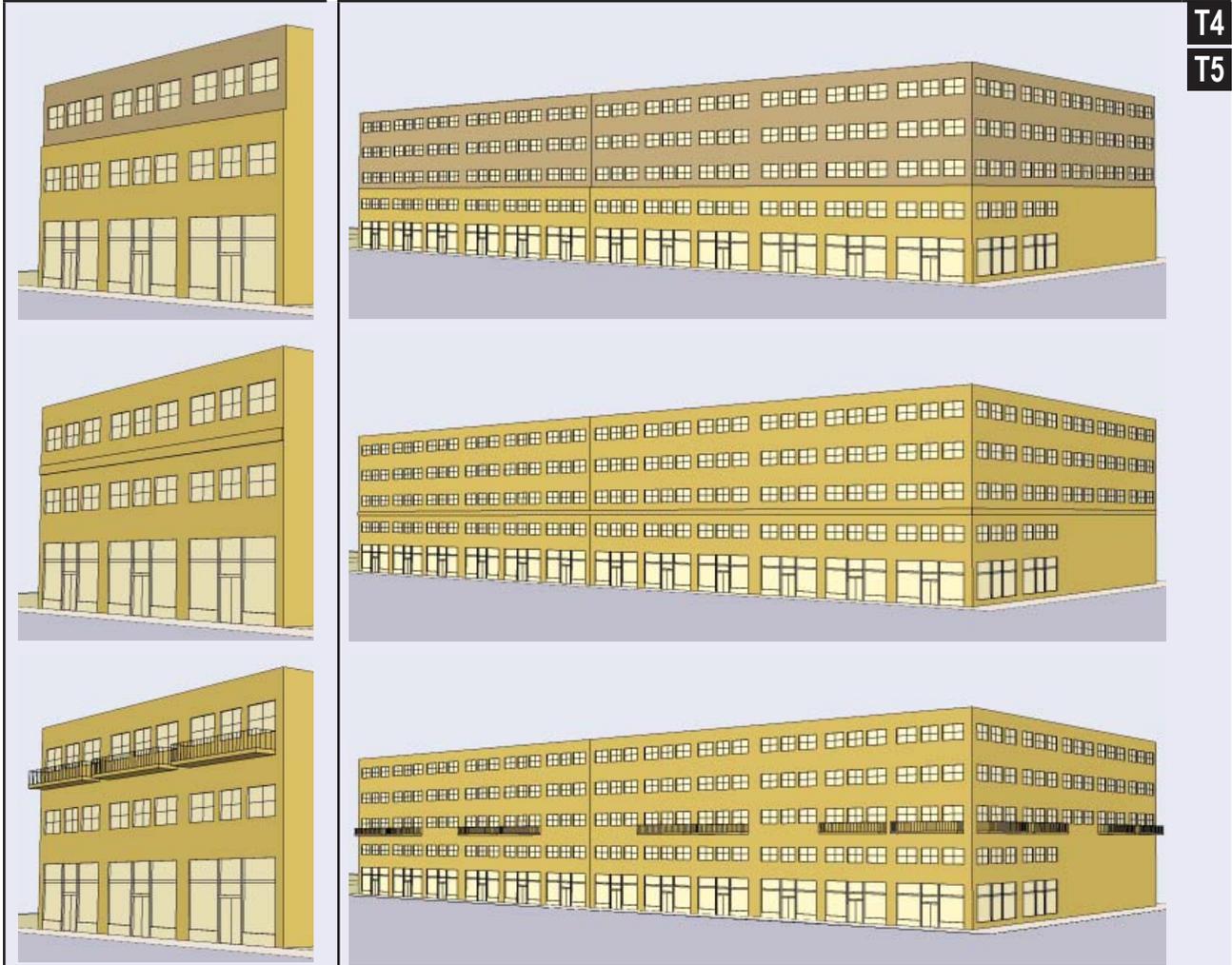
b. Canopy: Canopies or awnings which run across the full width of fenestrations on the first floor facade.



ARTICLE 6. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

San Marcos, Texas

c. Second Floor Expression Line: A line prescribed at a certain level of a building for the major part of the width of a facade, expressed by a variation in material or by a limited projection such as a molding or balcony.



d. Cornice: A cornice detail of at least 18 in. height and 6 in. in depth for the entire width of the frontage



ARTICLE 6. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

San Marcos, Texas

Vertical Expression Tools

e. Wall Notch: A front facade setback of a minimum depth of 4 ft. and length of 8 ft. spaced at a minimum interval of every 60 ft. across the building frontage.



f. Vertical Expression Line: A vertical line at a minimum interval of every 60 ft. across the building frontage. This may be expressed by a substantial change in material or a vertical molding with a minimum size of at least 4 in. depth and 12 in. width.



g. Wall Offset: Facade modules of a maximum length of 60 ft. with a minimum of a 4 ft. offset from an adjacent module.



6.4. UPPER FLOOR WINDOW DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

6.4.1. SPECIFIC TO ZONES T4, T5

- a. Each principal frontage shall use a minimum of one upper floor window design tool as specified in Table 6.5 and illustrated in Table 6.6.
- b. The DRC may administratively approve alternative window design tools provided the request meets the criteria established in the Downtown Design Guidelines.

TABLE 6.5 UPPER FLOOR WINDOW DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

The following table outlines the window design requirement.

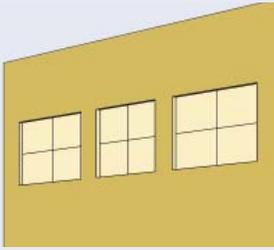
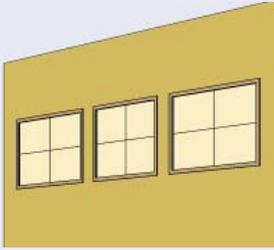
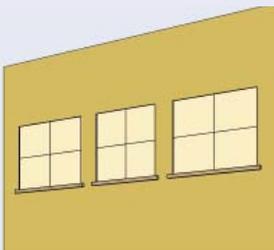
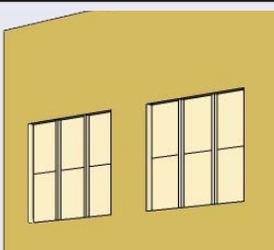
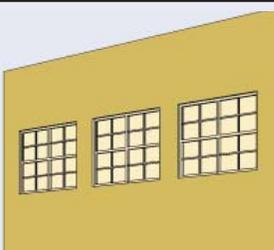
		Select a minimum of one upper floor window design alternative	
<p>a. Window Inset: The window pane is inset a minimum of 3 in. behind the surface of the wall.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>	
<p>b. Window Frame: Each window opening is framed with trim that is a minimum of 1 in. depth and 2 in. width.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>	
<p>c. Window Sill: Each window opening is defined by a sill, which extends a minimum of 2 in. from the wall surface, with a height of 3 in. and runs a minimum width equal to each window.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>	
<p>d. Traditional Vertical Proportions: The window is proportioned similar to that of traditional buildings, with a height to width ratio of between 1.75:1 and 2.5:1. Traditionally proportioned windows may be "ganged" to create larger fenestration areas where the dividers between the windows have a depth of at least 2" and project at least 2" in front of the surface of the glass.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>	
<p>e. True Divided Lights: Windows shall use true muntins.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>	

TABLE 6.6 UPPER FLOOR WINDOW DESIGN TOOLS

The following table illustrates the alternative window design tools.

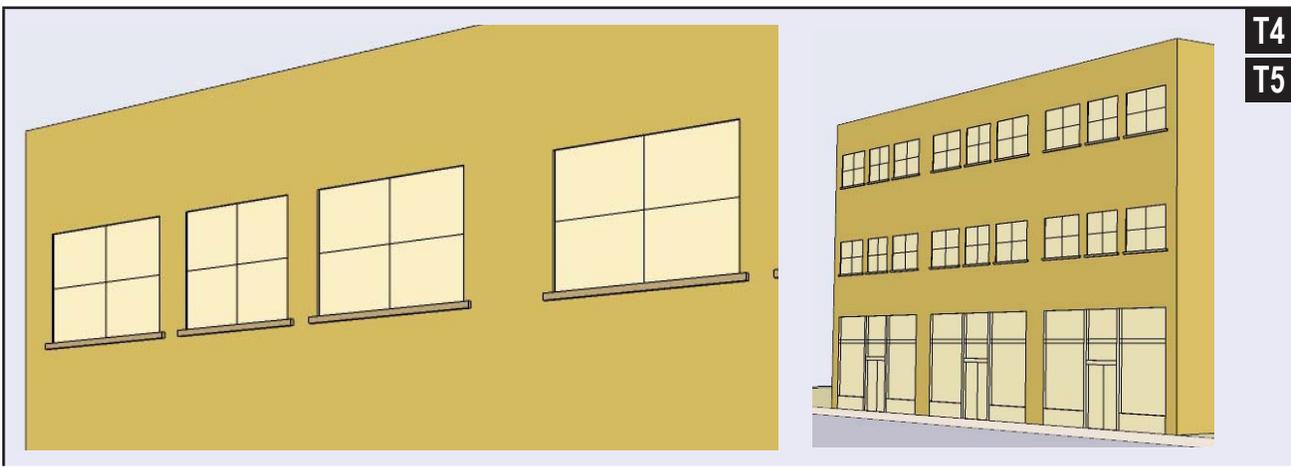
a. Window Inset: The window pane shall be inset a minimum of 3 in. behind the surface of the wall.



b. Window Frame: Each window opening shall be framed with trim that is a minimum dimension of 1 in. depth and 2 in. width.



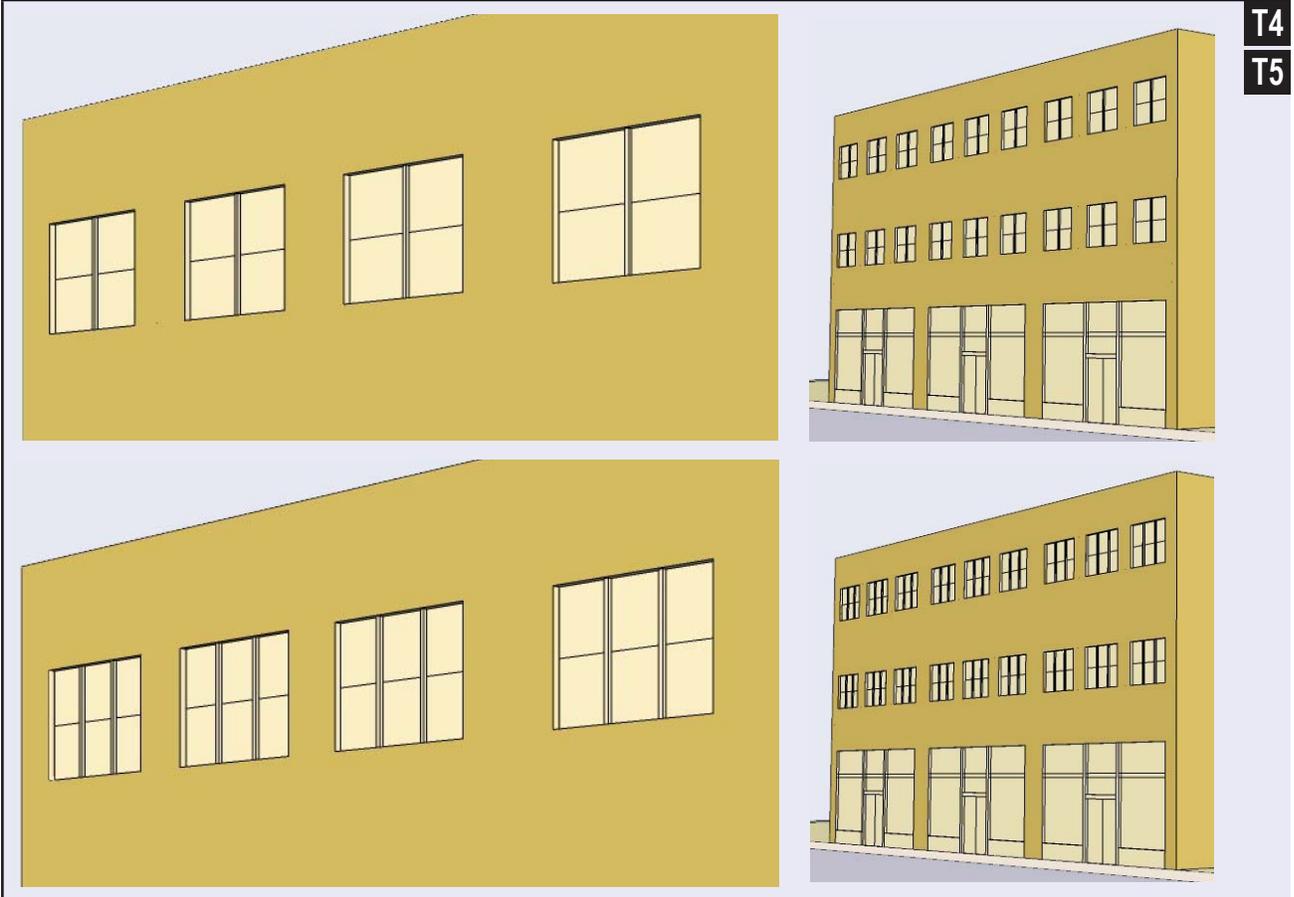
c. Window Sill: Each window opening shall be defined by a sill, which extends a minimum of 2 in. from the wall surface, with a height of 3 in. and a minimum width equal to that of each window.



ARTICLE 6. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

San Marcos, Texas

d. Traditional Proportions: The window shall have a height to width ratio of between 1.75:1 and 2.5:1. Traditionally proportioned windows may be “ganged” to create larger fenestration areas where the dividers between the windows have a depth of at least 2 in. and project at least 2 in. in front of the surface of the glass.



e. True Divided Lights: Windows shall use true muntins.



ARTICLE 6. DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS

6.5. VARIED UPPER FLOOR MASSING REQUIREMENT

6.5.1. Buildings over three stories in height with a frontage of 60 feet or greater shall provide variety in the upper floor massing. Select one alternative as specified below and in Table 6.7.

- a. A minimum of 40% of the building facade over three stories in height shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from the front building wall, or
- b. A minimum of 50% of the building facade over three stories in height shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the front building wall.

6.5.2. The DRC may administratively approve exceptions to the upper floor massing requirement provided the request meets the criteria established in the Downtown Design Guidelines.

TABLE 6.7 VARIED UPPER FLOOR MASSING ALTERNATIVES

This table illustrates the varied upper floor massing alternatives.

Select one alternative

Varied Upper Floor Massing Alternatives		
<p>a. A minimum of 40% of the building facade over three stories in height shall be set back a minimum of 20 ft. from the front building wall.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>
<p>b. A minimum of 50% of the building facade over three stories in height shall be set back a minimum of 15 ft. from the front building wall.</p>		<p>T4 T5</p>

Downtown Design Guidelines



San Marcos, TX
August 22, 2012

Introduction

The regulations in the SmartCode establish the basic requirements for building mass and scale throughout the downtown (see Design Context Map on page 5 for downtown boundary). These design guidelines supplement the SmartCode standards in the following ways:

- As advisory information for those who wish to better understand the intent of the design standards in the downtown SmartCode.
- As part of design review for the “administrative approval” process when alternatives are applied for.
- As part of design review for the “by warrant” process when alternatives are applied for.

About the Design Guidelines

The guidelines within this document focus on allowing for flexibility in design while also protecting the character of downtown and enhancing its pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. The guidelines and the review process through which they are administered seek to maintain downtown as a cohesive, livable place. Maintaining an attractive pedestrian-oriented environment is a fundamental concept. In addition, the guidelines serve as educational and planning tools for property owners and their design professionals who seek to make improvements downtown.

The design guidelines also provide a basis for making consistent decisions about the appropriateness of improvement projects requesting alternative strategies through the City’s design review process. This includes both Administrative Review by the Development Review Committee as well as Planning and Zoning Board review through the Warrant process. The Design Standards in the SmartCode and the City’s adopted Building Codes have been codified to meet the intent of the Design Guidelines. Projects that meet those standards and are not requesting exceptions shall be judged to have met the Downtown Design Guidelines.

Section 1: Design Principles for Downtown San Marcos

General Principles for New Development

This section sets forth fundamental principles for improvements in the downtown. These principles are broad in nature, focusing on qualitative aspects of design. Each improvement project in downtown should help forward the goals outlined in the Introduction and should also comply with these fundamental design principles:

1. Honor the heritage of the city

Buildings, sites and components of urban infrastructure that have historic significance should be preserved and considered as design inspiration for new work downtown. This does not mean copying earlier styles, but rather learning from them. New work around these resources should be compatible with them.

2. Celebrate Courthouse Square

As the major focal point of downtown, Courthouse Square should be valued in all urban design. This applies to properties in close proximity to the square, but also relates to improvements that may link other places to it, in terms of views, pedestrian circulation and building orientation.

3. Design to fit with the context

Improvement projects should consider their context. In some areas, that context remains strongly anchored by historic buildings. In other parts of downtown, the context is more contemporary, with individual historic buildings sometimes appearing as accents. In still other areas, no historic structures exist. In this respect, "designing in context" means helping to achieve the long term goals for each of these areas.

4. Promote creativity

Innovation in design is welcomed in downtown. Exploring new ways of designing buildings and spaces is appropriate when they contribute to a cohesive urban fabric. This type of creativity should be distinguished from simply being "different."

5. Design with authenticity

Downtown is defined by buildings and places that reflect their own time, including distinct construction techniques as well as style. The result is a sense of authenticity in building and materials. All new improvements should convey this sense of authenticity.

6. Design with consistency

Buildings and places in downtown that are highly valued are those which have a cohesive quality in their use of materials, organization of functions and overall design concept. Each new project should also embody a single, consistent design concept.

7. Design for durability

Downtown's cherished buildings and spaces are designed for the long term with durable materials. New work should have this same quality.

8. Design for sustainability

Aspects of cultural, economic and environmental sustainability that relate to urban design and compatibility should be woven into new developments and improvements.

9. Enhance the public realm

At the heart of downtown is an enhanced public realm, including streets, sidewalks and open spaces. Sidewalks and other pedestrian ways should be designed to invite their use through thoughtful planning and design. Improvement on private property also should enhance the public realm.

10. Enhance the pedestrian experience

Each improvement project should contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment. This includes defining street edges with buildings and spaces that are visually interesting and attract pedestrian activity. Buildings that convey a sense of human scale and streetscapes that invite walking are keys to successful design in downtown. Providing sidewalks of sufficient width for circulation and outdoor activities, and installing appropriate landscape and streetscape elements is also important.

Section 2: Design Contexts

This section includes goal statements for each of the design contexts within downtown. These contexts are areas identified by community workshop participants as having unique character, constraints and/or design goals. Please note the Courthouse Square area is not included, as a separate design review system is in place for the historic district. See the map on the following page for the location of the design contexts.

University Edge

The University Edge context should create a safe, pedestrian-friendly transition between campus and downtown. New campus development in this context should be compatible in scale and respectful of downtown design traditions. In addition, within the University Edge there are key public views up to campus and down to Courthouse Square. New development should preserve and enhance these views.

Downtown

Within the Downtown context it is especially important to maintain compatibility with Courthouse Square. Increased density is appropriate where it does not impact the character of the square.

Residential/Transition Edge

For new development within the Residential/Transition Edge context it is important to minimize impacts from higher scale development on the character of the adjacent residential neighborhoods. New development should provide a transition in scale between the taller buildings in the T5 zone and the existing residential neighborhoods.

Transit Oriented Development

Projects within the Transit Oriented Development context should establish a strong pedestrian orientation. The street front character is especially important here to encourage pedestrian activity.

Approach

The Approach context is the corridor between the highway and downtown, providing an entry procession into the heart of downtown. New development in this area should provide visual interest and not overwhelm the distinct character of the downtown.

Section 3: Design Guidelines

Overarching Guidelines

This section provides general design guidelines for projects throughout all of the design contexts downtown.

Building Scale

A new building should convey a sense of human scale through its design features.

1. Establish a sense of human scale in a building design.

Views

Views from the public right of way to the university and Courthouse Square are important and should be retained. The location of the building on a site, in addition to its scale, height, and massing, can impact views from the adjacent public right of way, including streets, sidewalks, intersections, and public spaces.

2. Minimize the impacts to primary views from the public right of way to the university and Courthouse Square.

Guidelines Specific to the Design Standards

This section provides specific guidelines on topics directly related to the design standards.

Building Height

The variety in building heights that exists in downtown San Marcos helps to define the character of the area. New development should continue the tradition of height variation, expressing and supporting human scale and architectural diversity in the area. New buildings above three stories should set back upper floors to maintain a sense of human scale at the street and minimize impacts to lower scale historic structures downtown. The base code allows five stories in downtown, but additional height may be considered. The following table should be used when analyzing requests for additional height.

3. Provide variation in building height in a large project.
4. Position the taller portion of a structure away from neighboring buildings of lower scale or other sensitive edges.

Height Strategy by Context

Design Context	Goal(s)	Additional Height in First and Second Layer	Additional Height in Third Layer
University Edge	Preserve key public views up the hill to campus.	Alternatives which maintain sufficient public access to key views up the hill may be considered.	Alternatives may be considered where taller structures will provide greater residential opportunities within proximity to campus and key views are sufficiently maintained.
Downtown	Maintain compatibility with Court-house Square.	Flexibility for building height requirements may be considered where it will not be visible from the square. Overall mass should maintain a sense of human scale and not appear out of character with the Downtown Historic District.	No additional height adjacent to Downtown Historic District. Additional height may be considered where it will not obscure key views.
Residential/ Transition Edge	Minimize impacts from higher scale development on the character of adjacent residential neighborhoods. Provide a transition in scale between the T5 zone and the neighborhoods.	No additional height.	Additional height should only be permitted if it is not visible from the public right of way or the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
Transit Oriented Development	An increased density at and surrounding the future rail stop is desired.	Additional height at the street wall may be appropriate where the building maintains a sense of human scale and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.	Additional height may be appropriate here where the building maintains a sense of human scale and maintains a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
Approach	The intent for the approach area is to provide corridors between the highway and downtown.	Additional height may be appropriate where it does not directly impact residential neighborhoods. The building should maintain a sense of human scale and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.	Additional height may be appropriate where it does not directly impact residential neighborhoods. The building should maintain a sense of human scale and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

Building Mass and Articulation

Traditional development patterns create a rhythm along the street by the repetition of similar building widths and vertical proportions. Variations in massing and building articulation should be expressed throughout a new structure, resulting in a composition of building modules that relate to the scale of traditional buildings.

5. Provide horizontal expression at lower floor heights to establish a sense of scale.
6. Provide vertical articulation in a larger building mass to establish a sense of scale.
7. Maintain established development patterns created by the repetition of similar building widths along the street.
8. Design floor to floor heights to establish a sense of scale and reflect San Marcos traditions.

Canopies and Awnings

Canopies and awnings are noteworthy features on many buildings in the downtown, and their continued use is encouraged. Traditionally, these features were simple in detail, and reflected the character of the building to which they were attached.

9. An awning or canopy should be in character with the building and streetscape.

Window Design

The manner in which windows are used to articulate a building wall is an important consideration in establishing a sense of scale and visual continuity. In traditional commercial buildings, a storefront system was installed on the ground floor and upper story windows most often appeared as punched openings. Window design and placement should help to establish a sense of scale and provide pedestrian interest.

10. Provide a high level of ground floor transparency on a building in an area traditionally defined by commercial storefronts.
11. The use of a contemporary storefront design is encouraged in commercial settings.
12. Arrange windows to reflect the traditional rhythm and general alignment of windows in the area.

Section 4: Sign Guidelines

Overarching Sign Guidelines

This section provides general design guidelines for signs throughout the downtown. Balancing the functional requirements for signs with the objectives for the overall character of the downtown is a key sign design consideration. In downtown, a sign is seen as serving two functions: first, to attract attention; and second, to convey information, essentially identifying the business or services offered. Orderly sign location and design should be applied to make fewer and smaller signs more effective. If a sign is mounted on a building with a well-designed facade, the building front alone can serve much of the attention-getting function. The sign can then focus on conveying information in a well-conceived manner. Similarly, for a free-standing sign, landscaping and other site amenities can help to give identity to the businesses located on the site. In this respect, each sign should be considered with the overall composition of the building and the site in mind. Signs should be in scale with their structure and integrated with surrounding buildings.

13. Consider a sign in the context of the overall building and site design.
14. Design a sign to be in scale with its setting.
15. Design a sign to highlight architectural features of the building.
16. Design a sign to convey visual interest to pedestrians.
17. Avoid damaging or obscuring architectural details or features when installing signs on historic structures.

Guidelines Specific to the Sign Standards

This section provides specific sign guidelines on topics directly related to the sign standards.

Historic Signs

Historic signs contribute to the character of downtown. They also have individual value, apart from the buildings to which they are attached. Historic signs of all types should be retained and restored whenever possible. This is especially important when they are a significant part of a building's history or design.

18. Consider history, context and design when determining whether to retain a historic sign.

Sign Character

A sign should be in character with the materials, colors and details of the building and its site. The integration of an attached sign with the building or building facade is important and should be a key factor in its design and installation. Signs also should be visually interesting and clearly legible. Signs that appear to be custom-designed and fabricated, and that convey visual interest in the urban setting are preferred. Those that are scaled to the pedestrian are especially encouraged. A sign should also reflect the overall context of the building and surrounding area.

19. A sign should be subordinate to the overall building composition.
20. Use sign materials that are compatible with the architectural character and materials of the building.
21. A sign should not obscure character-defining features of a building.

Sign Lighting

Illumination should occur in a manner that keeps it subordinate to the overall building and its site as well as the neighborhood, while accomplishing the functional needs of the business. Minimize surface glare and manage light spill such that glare is not created on adjoining properties.

22. Where allowed, an external light source should be shielded to direct the light and minimize glare.
23. Neon, halo and internal, diffused illumination may be considered if located at the street level and designed to be in character with, and subordinate to the building facade.

Specific Sign Types

This section includes guidelines for the specific sign types allowed in the sign standards.

Awning and Canopy Signs

An awning or canopy sign is flat against the surface of the awning or canopy material.

24. Use an awning or canopy sign in areas with high pedestrian use.
25. Use an awning or canopy sign when other sign types would obscure architectural details.

Projecting Sign

A projecting sign is attached perpendicular to the wall of a building or structure.

26. Design a bracket for a projecting sign to complement the sign composition.
27. Locate a projecting sign to relate to the building facade and entries.

Sandwich Board

A sandwich board is a portable sign designed in an A-frame or other fashion, and having back-to-back sign faces.

28. Locate a sandwich board to maintain a clear circulation path on the sidewalk.
29. Design the sandwich board to be durable and have a stable base.

Wall Sign

A wall sign is any sign attached parallel to, but within 18 inches of a wall of a building including individual letters, cabinet signs, or signs painted on the surface of a wall.

30. Place a wall sign to be flat against the building facade.
31. Place wall signs to integrate with and not obscure building details and elements.

Directory Sign

A tenant panel or directory sign displays the tenant name and location for a building containing multiple tenants.

32. Use a directory sign to consolidate small individual signs on a larger building.
33. Locate a directory sign at the street level entrance to upper floor businesses or on facades facing entrances to alleys, rear lanes and parking lots for business wayfinding purposes.

Pole and Monument Signs

A monument sign is a sign that is erected on a solid base placed directly on the ground and constructed of a solid material. A pole mounted sign is generally mounted on one or two simple poles.

34. A pole or monument sign may be considered where it has been used traditionally and the building or activity is set back from the street or public right-of-way.
35. A pole or monument sign may be considered on a historic property or within a historic district when it is demonstrated that no other option is appropriate.
36. Design a pole or monument sign to be in character and proportion with its structure and site.
37. Design a monument sign to incorporate a sturdy supporting base that is at least 75% of the width of the sign face at its widest point. Appropriate base materials include, but are not limited to brick, stone, masonry and concrete.

Appendix A: The Intent of the Standards

The following section provides intent statements for each of the tools, or set of tools, used in the standards. These statements should be used in determining compatibility of alternative designs with the intent of the standards.

1. Contextual Height Step Down Requirement

To provide a compatible sense of scale along sensitive edges in the downtown by using lower building heights for areas of a property adjacent to a Sensitive Site.

2. Expression Requirements

Traditionally, buildings in downtown San Marcos have an established sense of scale and proportion and express a visual rhythm and pedestrian interest at the street front. This should be continued in new projects. Vertical and horizontal articulation should express a sense of human scale and provide visual interest on a principal frontage.

Expression Requirements: Vertical Expression

Vertical articulation techniques should provide interest in design and human scale. The purpose of these articulations is to ensure that the front of a new structure has a variety of offsets, surface relief, and insets to reflect a more traditional rhythm and scale at the street front.

Expression Requirements: Horizontal Articulation

The objective of horizontal articulation tools is to create a sense of human scale, facade depth and visual interest on a building facade.

3. Window Design Requirements

A key feature of traditional buildings in downtown San Marcos is that window openings are clearly defined, either by a substantial inset behind the wall surface or by framing elements and sills. Window definition should add a sense of depth to the facade and contribute to a sense of human scale and visual interest.

4. Varied Upper Floor Massing Requirement

Buildings in downtown San Marcos are typically three stories or less in height. In most cases a range of building heights occur across a single block face. As the desired density increase is incorporated, it is important that new, taller structures not dominate the street front. Taller buildings should vary upper floor massing to provide variety in building height as perceived from the street and to maintain a sense of pedestrian scale at the sidewalk.

Appendix B: Examples of Design Principles Applied

The following photographs provide examples of improvements that illustrate how some of the design guidelines may apply in downtown San Marcos. Some specific design features are identified in the captions. Note that, in some cases, while a specific design feature is described as being an appropriate example, the overall building shown may not meet all of the city's other design standards and guidelines.



Vertical Expression:
 • Vertical expression lines

Horizontal Expression:
 • Cornice



Vertical Expression:
 • Vertical expression lines

Horizontal Expression:
 • Canopy



Vertical expression:
 • Wall Offset

Horizontal expression:
 • Horizontal expression line



• Stepped down and varied massing

Vertical Expression:
 • Wall Offset



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notch

Horizontal Expression:

- Horizontal expression line



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notch

Horizontal Expression:

- Varied parapet



Vertical Expression:

- Wall Offset

Horizontal expression:

- Horizontal expression line/materials change
- Varied parapet height



Vertical Expression:

- Wall Offset

Horizontal expression:

- Moldings
- Cornice



- Varied upper floor massing

Horizontal Expression:

- Change in materials
- Varied parapet



- Stepped down and varied massing

Vertical Expression:

- Change in materials



Vertical Expression:

- Change in materials

Horizontal Expression:

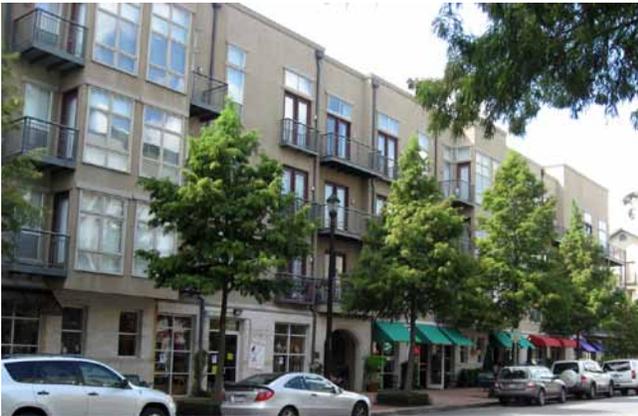
- Moldings
- Cornice



- Varied upper floor massing

Horizontal Expression:

- Varied parapet
- Canopies and awnings



Horizontal Expression:

- Balconies



Vertical Expression:

- Wall Offset

Window Design:

- Vertical window proportions



- Step down in height adjacent to historic building

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notch

Horizontal Expression:

- Change in materials



Horizontal Expression:

- Canopy
- Moldings

Window Design:

- True divided lights
- Vertical proportions (in pairs)



Window Design:

- Frame
- Vertical proportions (in sets of 2 and 4)

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice
- Molding



- Varied upper floor massing

Vertical Expression:

- Wall notch

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice



Vertical Expression:

- Wall offsets



- Varied parapet line

Window Design:

- Vertical proportions (in pairs)
- True divided lights



Window Design:

- Sills
- True divided lights
- Window inset



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notch
- Change in materials

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornices
- Balconies

Window Design:

- Vertical proportions (in sets of three)



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notch

Horizontal Expression:

- Awnings at first floor
- Window moldings at second floor
- Cornice



Horizontal Expression:

- Awning & canopies

Window Design:

- Sills
- Vertical proportions



- Varied parapet line

Vertical Expression:

- Change in materials
- Vertical expression line (pilasters)



Vertical Expression:

- Vertical expression line (pilasters or attached columns)

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice
- Change in materials (first and upper floors)



Horizontal Expression:

- Change in materials (at first floor)
- Cornice

Window Design:

- Vertical proportions



- Varied upper floor massing

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice
- Change in materials (upper floor)

Window Design:

- Inset
- Sills
- True divided lights



- Varied upper floor heights

Horizontal Expression:

- Change in materials



Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice

Window Design:

- Sills
- Inset



Horizontal Expression:

- Cornice
- Second floor expression line



- Varied upper floor massing

Vertical Expression:

- Wall offset

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornices



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notches

Horizontal Expression:

- Change in materials at first floor
- Cornices



Horizontal Expression:

- Awnings



- Varied upper floor heights

Vertical Expression:

- Wall offsets
- Cornice



Window Design:

- Inset
- Sills



Window Design:

- Inset
- Sills



Vertical Expression:

- Wall notches
- Change in materials

Horizontal Expression:

- Cornices
- Change in materials

Appendix C: Public Lighting Standard Details