

RICHMOND 300 ZONING CODE REFRESH

Revisit of District Standards & Rules of Interpretation
& Draft Admin Section Discussion
February 2026 ZAC Meeting



TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- 1 Revisit of District Standards & Rules of Interpretation**
- 2 Draft Administration Section Discussion**

REVISIT OF DISTRICT STANDARDS & RULES OF INTERPRETATION

DISTRICT STANDARDS & RULES OF INTERPRETATION

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ZONING ORDINANCE | RICHMOND, VA 2-1

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2-2 ZONING ORDINANCE | RICHMOND, VA

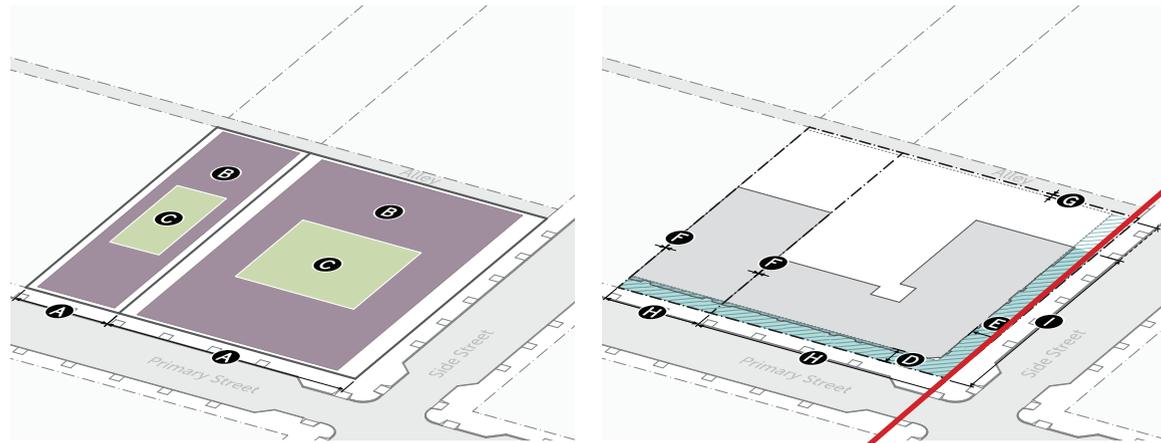
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DISTRICT STANDARDS & RULES OF INTERPRETATION

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS
MIXED USE DISTRICTS

2.3.4. MX-5 MIXED USE 5

A. Lot Standards



1. Lot Size	Sec. 2.6.2	4. Building Setbacks	Sec. 2.6.5
A Lot width (min)	0'	D Primary street (min/max)	0'/15'
2. Dwelling Units	Sec. 2.6.3	E Side street (min/max)	0'/15'
Dwelling units per building (max)	n/a	F Side (min)	0'
3. Coverage	Sec. 2.6.4	Rear (min)	0'
B Building coverage (max)	80%	G Alley (min)	3'
C Amenity space (min)	15%	5. Build-to	Sec. 2.6.6
		H Primary street (min)	80%
		I Side street (min)	40%
		6. Parking Location	Sec. 2.6.7
		Parking setback (min)	n/a
		Parking between building & street	Not allowed
		7. Streetscape	Sec. 2.6.8
		Clear pedestrian zone (min)	10'

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS
RULES OF INTERPRETATION

B. Outdoor Amenity Space

An outdoor area on a lot designated to be used for active or passive recreation.

1. Intent

- To help provide adequate recreation and open space areas for developments, and to ensure such spaces are accessible, usable, and safe; and
- To encourage high-quality, pedestrian-oriented, and publicly accessible gathering spaces along the street.

2. Applicability

- The outdoor amenity space requirements apply to all lots.
- Where the calculation of outdoor amenity space requires less than 400 square feet, no amenity space is required.
- Where sublots are allowed, outdoor amenity space is calculated for each lot, not individual sublots.

3. Standards

a. General

- The cumulative area of outdoor amenity space provided on a lot cannot be less than required by the zoning district.
- Required amenity space must be classified as either Common Outdoor Amenity Space or Pedestrian Outdoor Amenity Space, and must meet the standards according to the classification.

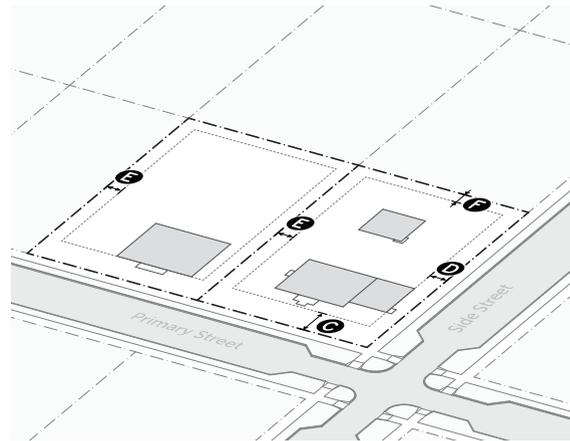
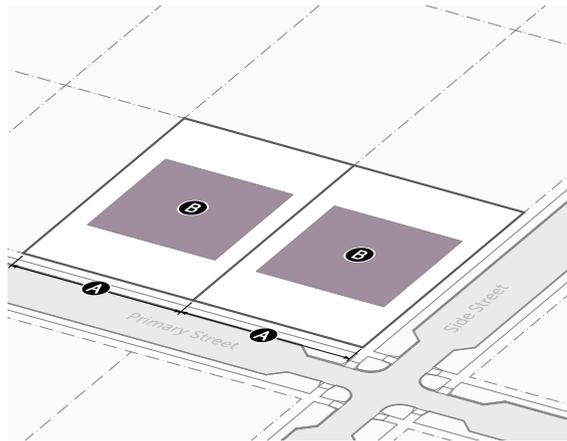


DISTRICT STANDARDS & RULES OF INTERPRETATION

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

2.2.3. RD-A RESIDENTIAL DETACHED LOW

A. Lot Standards



1. Lot Size	Sec. 2.6.2
A Lot width (min)	90'
2. Dwelling Units	Sec. 2.6.3
Dwelling units per lot (max)	
Base	1 + ADU
Housing preservation bonus	2 + ADU
3. Coverage	Sec. 2.6.4
B Building coverage (max)	30%
Amenity space (min)	n/a

4. Building Setbacks	Sec. 2.6.5
C Primary street (min)	Existing range or 20'
D Side street (min)	10'
E Side (min)	9'
F Rear (min)	9'
Alley (min)	3'

5. Build-to	Sec. 2.6.6
Primary street (min)	n/a
Side street (min)	n/a

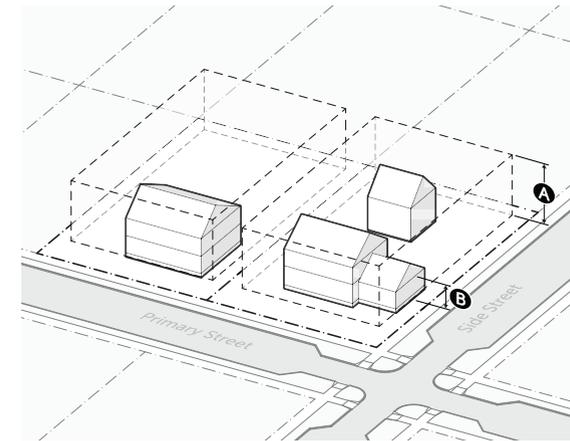
6. Parking Location	Sec. 2.6.7
Parking setback (min)	n/a
Parking between building & street	Allowed

7. Streetscape	Sec. 2.6.8
Clear pedestrian zone (min)	5'

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

RD-A

B. Building Standards



1. Massing	Sec. 2.6.9
A Building height (max)	3 stories/35'
Width (max)	n/a
2. Active Depth	Sec. 2.6.10
Primary street (min)	n/a
Side street (min)	n/a
3. Ground Story	Sec. 2.6.11
B Ground story height (min)	9'
Finished floor elevation (min/max)	0'/4'

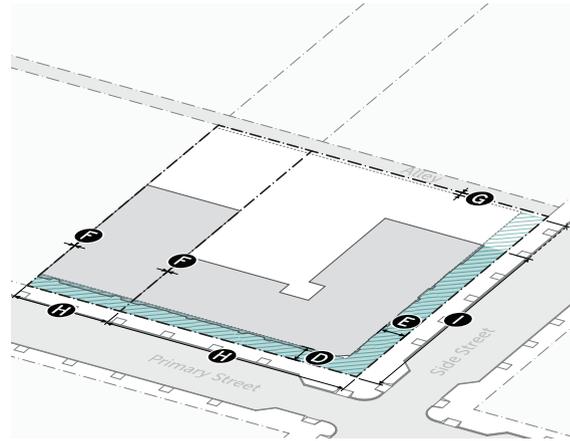
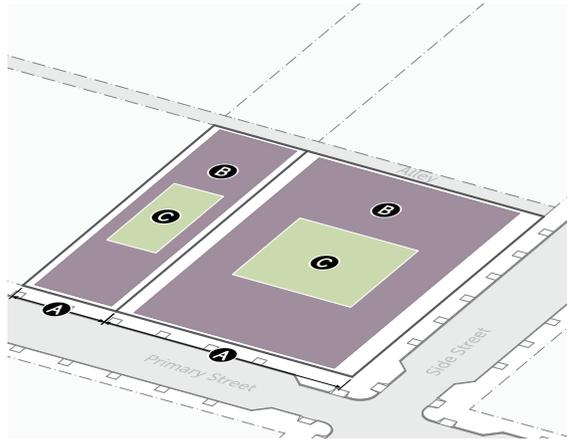
	Primary St.	Side St.
4. Windows	Sec. 2.6.12	
Ground story (min)	n/a	n/a
Upper story (min)	n/a	n/a
Blank wall width (max)	n/a	n/a
5. Doors	Sec. 2.6.13	
Street-facing entrance	Required	n/a
C Street-facing entry spacing (max)	100'	n/a

DISTRICT STANDARDS & RULES OF INTERPRETATION

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS
MIXED USE DISTRICTS

2.3.4. MX-5 MIXED USE 5

A. Lot Standards



1. Lot Size	Sec. 2.6.2
A Lot width (min)	0'
2. Dwelling Units	Sec. 2.6.3
Dwelling units per building (max)	n/a
3. Coverage	Sec. 2.6.4
B Building coverage (max)	80%
C Amenity space (min)	15%

4. Building Setbacks	Sec. 2.6.5
D Primary street (min/max)	0'/15'
E Side street (min/max)	0'/15'
F Side (min)	0'
Rear (min)	0'
G Alley (min)	3'

5. Build-to	Sec. 2.6.6
H Primary street (min)	80%
I Side street (min)	40%

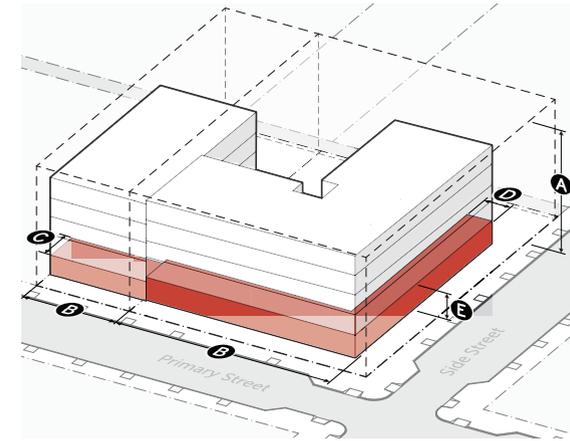
6. Parking Location	Sec. 2.6.7
Parking setback (min)	n/a
Parking between building & street	Not allowed

7. Streetscape	Sec. 2.6.8
Clear pedestrian zone (min)	10'

ARTICLE 2. ZONING DISTRICTS
MIXED USE DISTRICTS

MX-5

B. Building Standards



1. Massing	Sec. 2.6.9
A Building height (max)	5 stories/75'
B Width (max)	
Building width	200'
Attached units in a row	10

2. Active Depth	Sec. 2.6.10
C Primary street (min)	
Residential	9'
Nonresidential	20'
D Side street (min)	9'

3. Ground Story	Sec. 2.6.11
E Ground story height (min)	
Residential	10'
Nonresidential	12'
Finished floor elevation (min/max)	-2'/4'

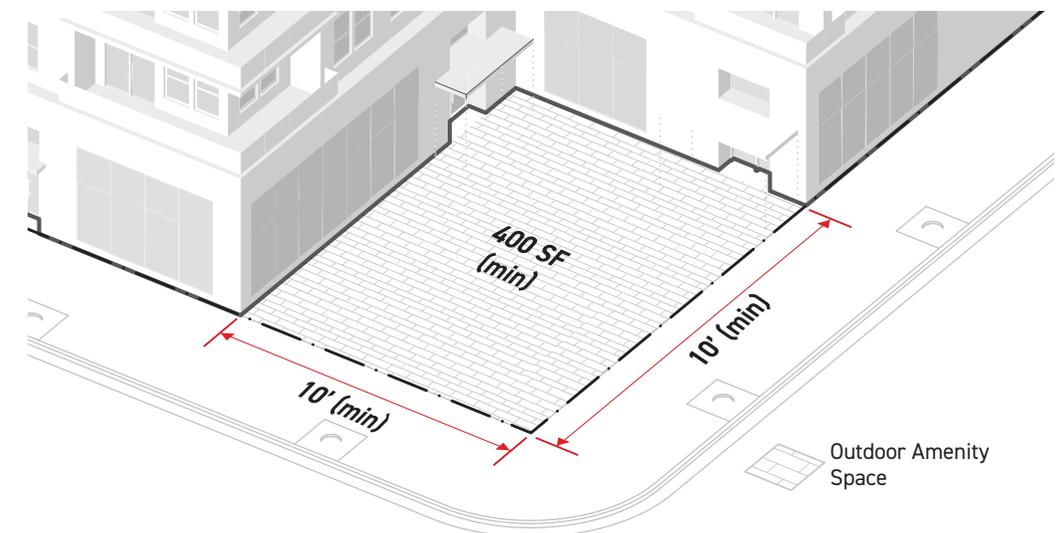
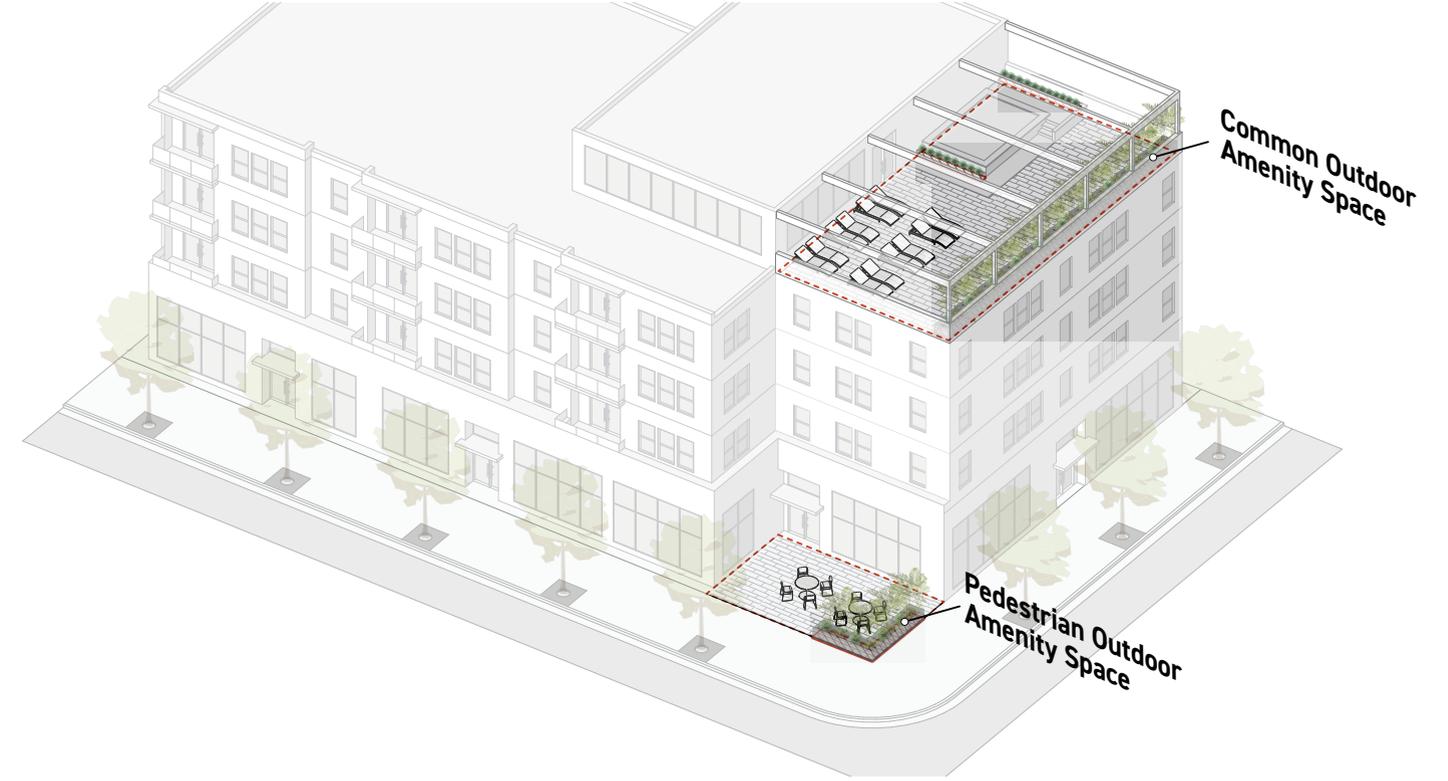
4. Windows	Sec. 2.6.12	
F Ground story (min)		
Residential	20%	20%
Nonresidential	50%	30%
G Upper story (min)	15%	15%
H Blank wall width (max)	15'	25'

5. Doors	Sec. 2.6.13	
Street-facing entrance	Required	Required
I Street-facing entry spacing (max)	40'	60'

LOT STANDARDS: OUTDOOR AMENITY SPACE

Intent: To help provide shared on-site recreation and open space areas; and to encourage pedestrian-oriented and publicly accessible gathering spaces.

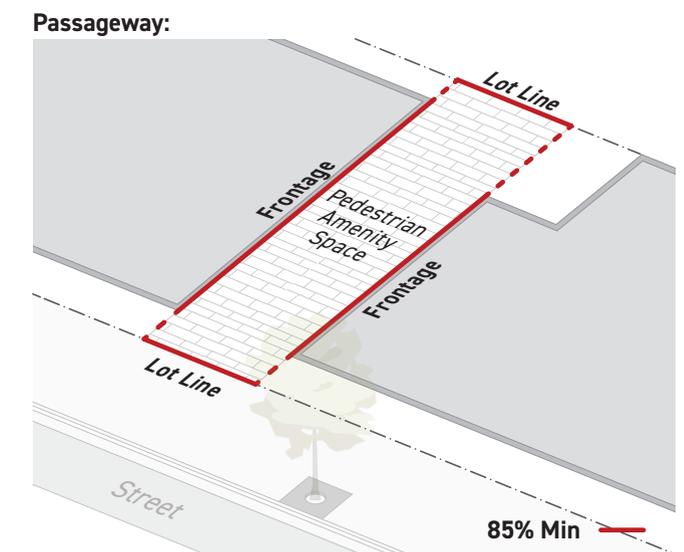
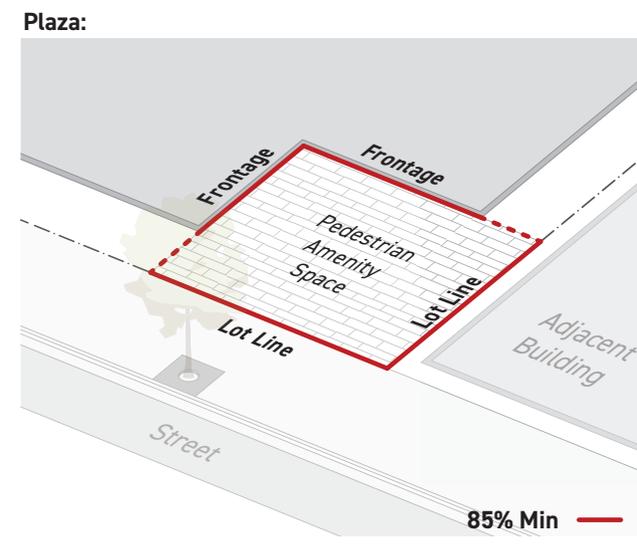
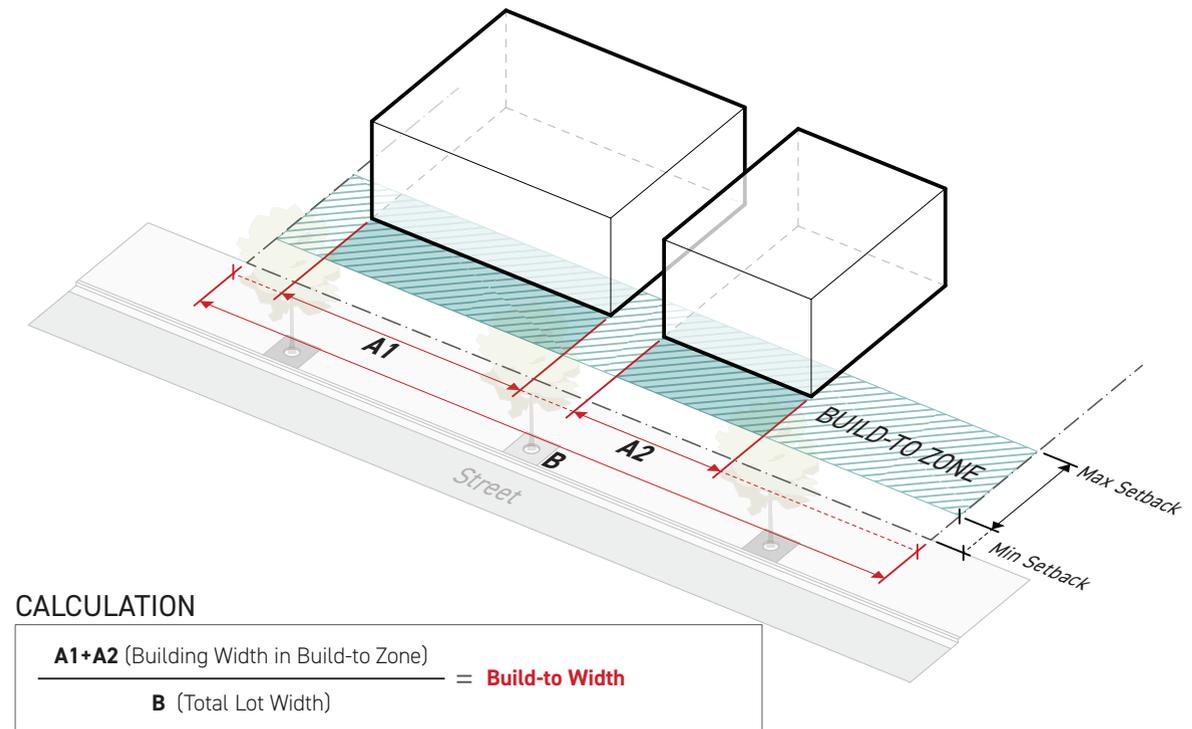
- + **2 types:** Common & Pedestrian
- + **Requirement:** Percentage based on lot area
- + **400 SF min area, 10 foot min width/length**
- + **Can be covered but not enclosed** - must have a **minimum clear height of 15 feet**
- + **Pedestrian outdoor amenity space counts double**, but must meet publicly accessible



LOT STANDARDS: BUILD-TO

Intent: Pulls buildings up to the street, regulates the placement of buildings so they frame the street, promotes walkability.

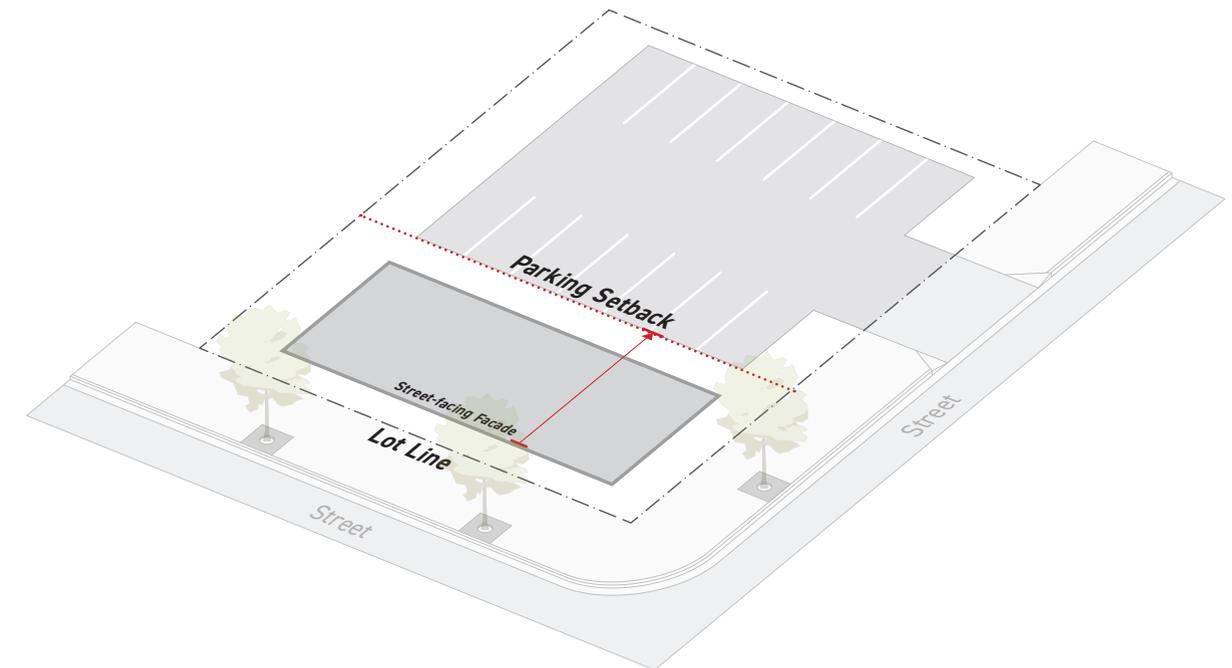
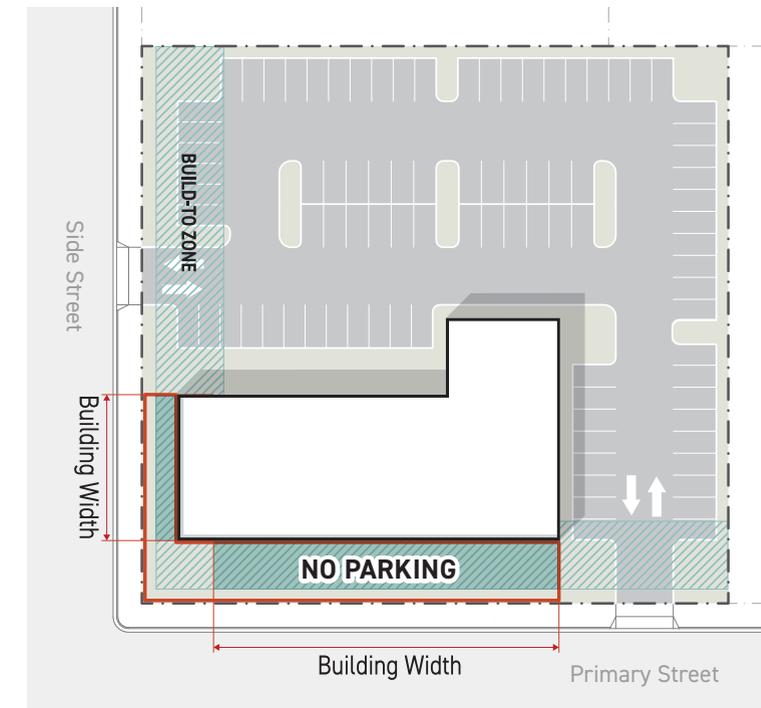
- + A minimum percentage of the lot frontage, within the build-to zone, must be occupied by building
- + Must address the corner
- + Exceptions are made when **pedestrian amenity spaces** are provided. Other exceptions include **clipped corners** and **vehicle access**



LOT STANDARDS: PARKING LOCATION

Intent: To minimize impact of cars on the public realm and to promote a comfortable, safe, engaging, and attractive streetscape with active uses.

- + **Restricts** parking between the **building and the street**
- + **Parking setbacks** require that parking be located a certain distance from the from lot line



LOT STANDARDS: CLEAR PEDESTRIAN ZONE

Intent: To help ensure a safe and accessible route for all users along the street edge, including those with mobility devices like wheelchairs.

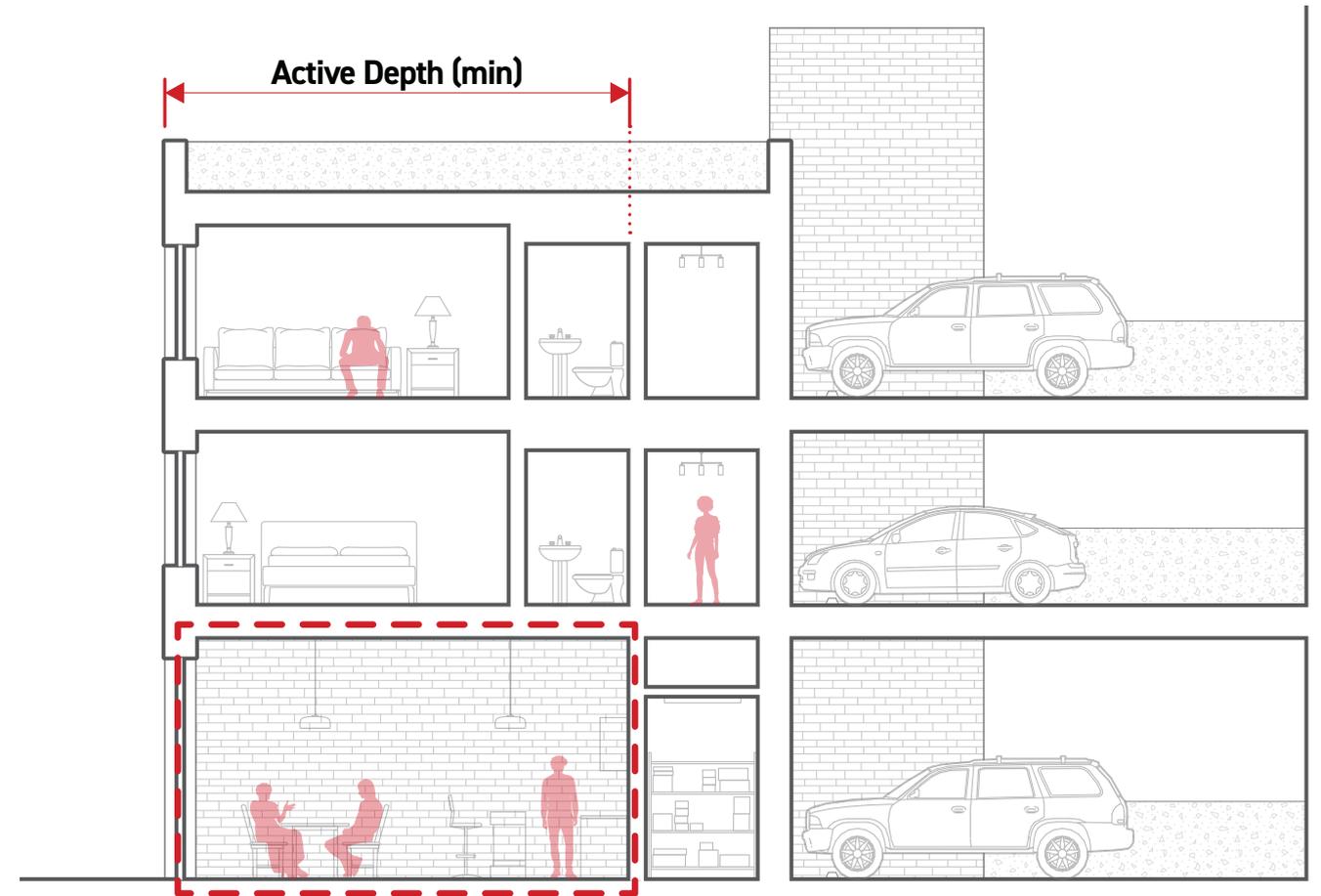
- + Clear pedestrian zone requires that a **minimum sidewalk width** (excluding planting or utility area) be present
- + Where not enough width is present, the building **must be set back** and an **easement established to extend the sidewalk width**, regardless of front setback requirements



BUILDING STANDARDS: ACTIVE DEPTH

Intent: To help minimize the impact of inactive spaces on the public realm and to promote a comfortable, safe, engaging, and attractive built environment.

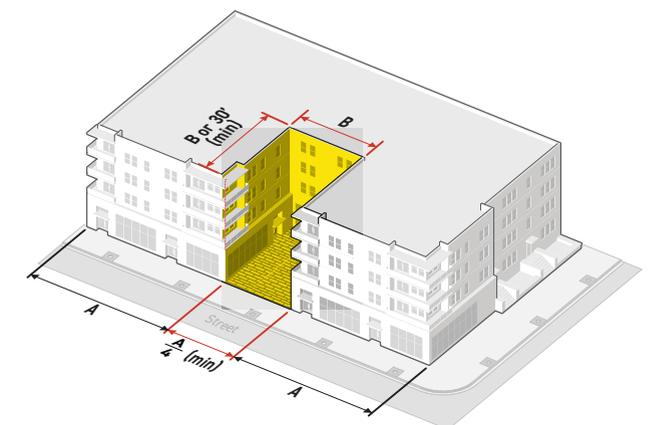
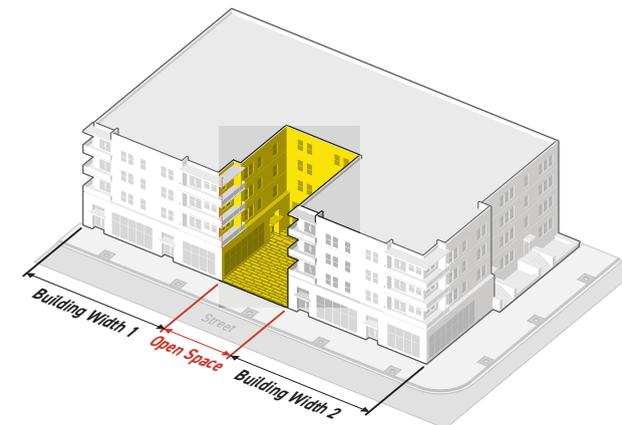
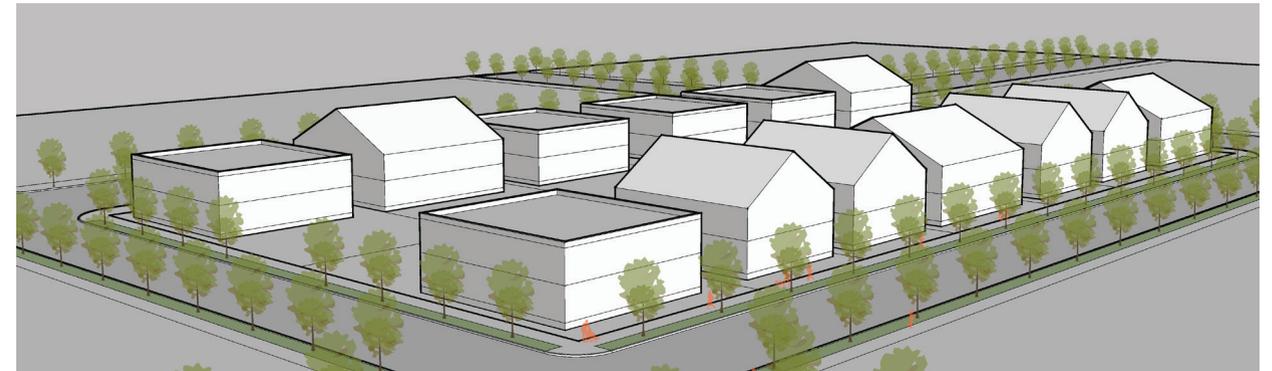
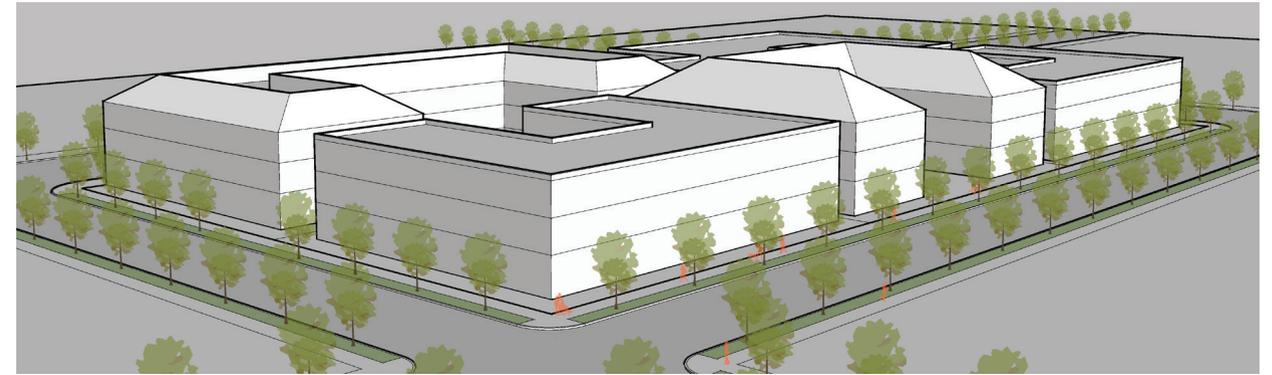
- + **Inactive uses** (parking, corridors, stairwells, storage, electrical rooms) **must be set back a certain distance** from the sidewalk
- + Applies only to portions of a building used to meet the **build-to requirement**
- + **20%** of required active depth **can have inactive** uses, but **not parking**



BUILDING STANDARDS: BUILDING WIDTH

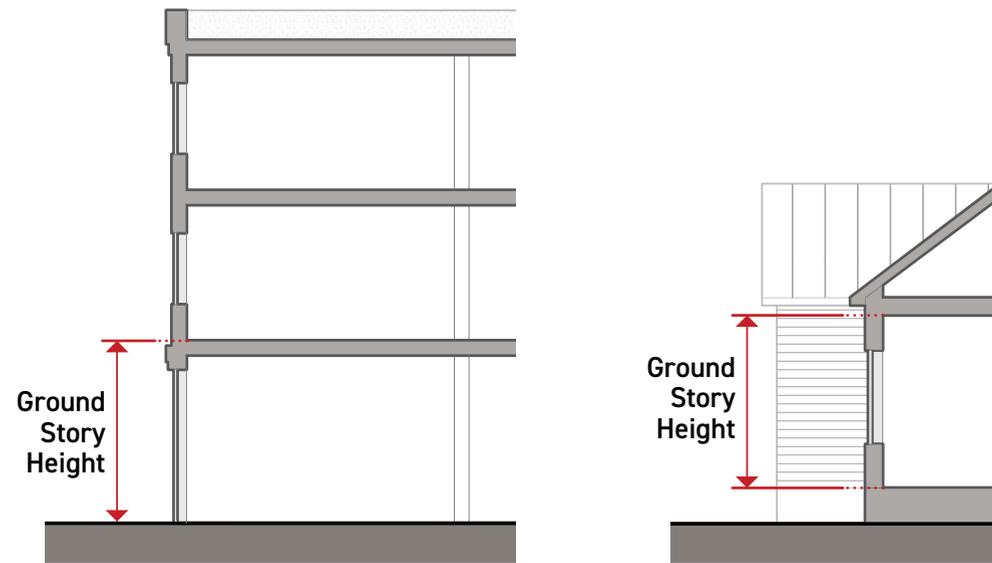
Intent: To prevent buildings that are out of context with the traditional patterns by breaking up wide buildings into smaller components.

- + **No building** can be wider than the **maximum building width** allowed by the district
- + Exceptions are made when a **building is broken up with an articulation** that meets certain dimensions
- + **Two buildings** can abut one another provided that they have **no shared components** and are **structurally independent** from one another
- + Maximum units in a row **requires breaks** after a **certain number of attached units**

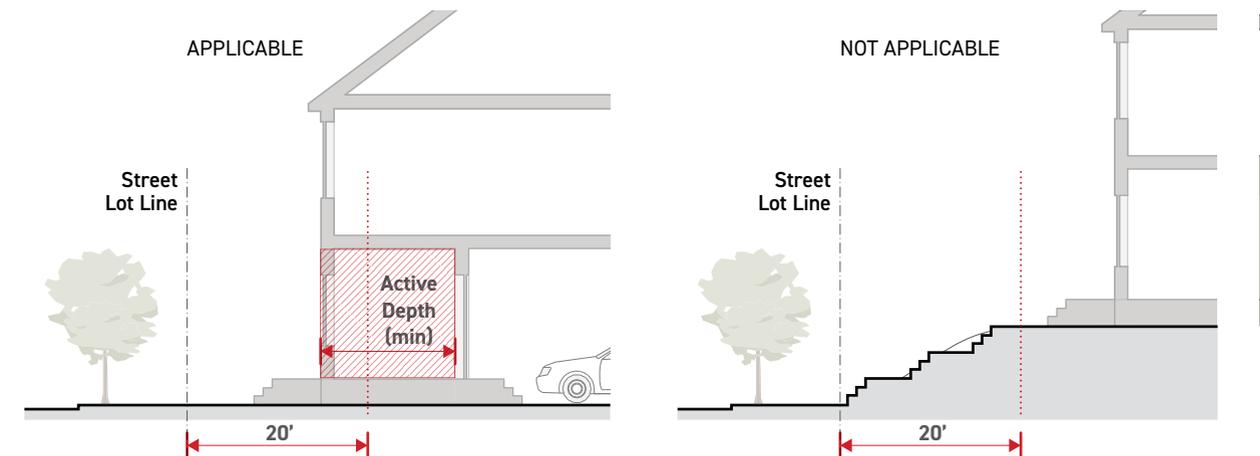


BUILDING STANDARDS: GROUND STORY

- + **Minimum ground story height** promotes high-quality spaces that are adaptable and appropriate to their intended use and surrounding context
- + Ground story height **can be no lower than the minimum ground story height** required by the district



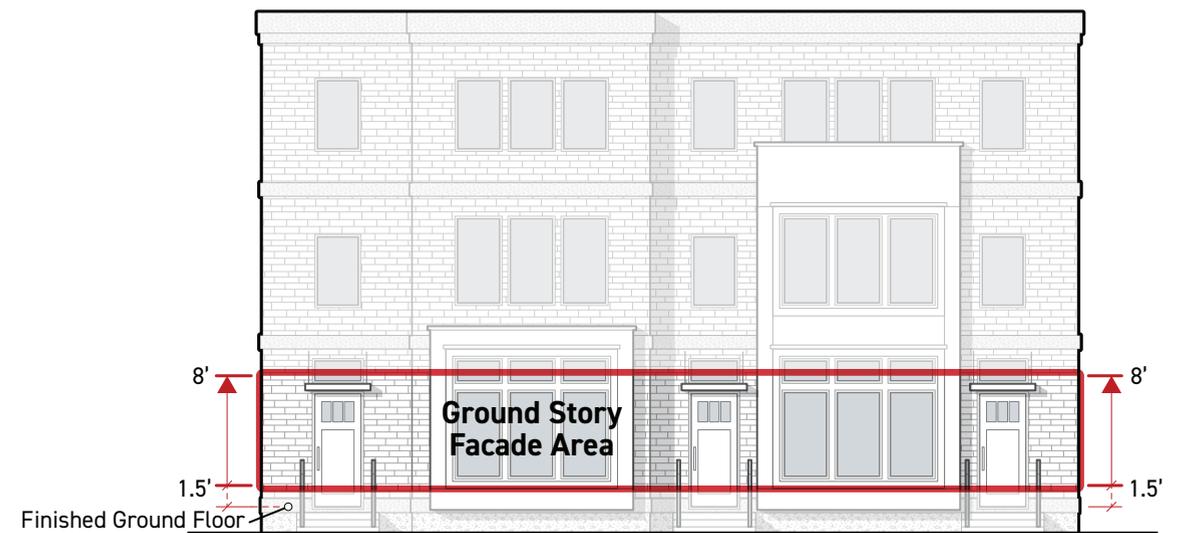
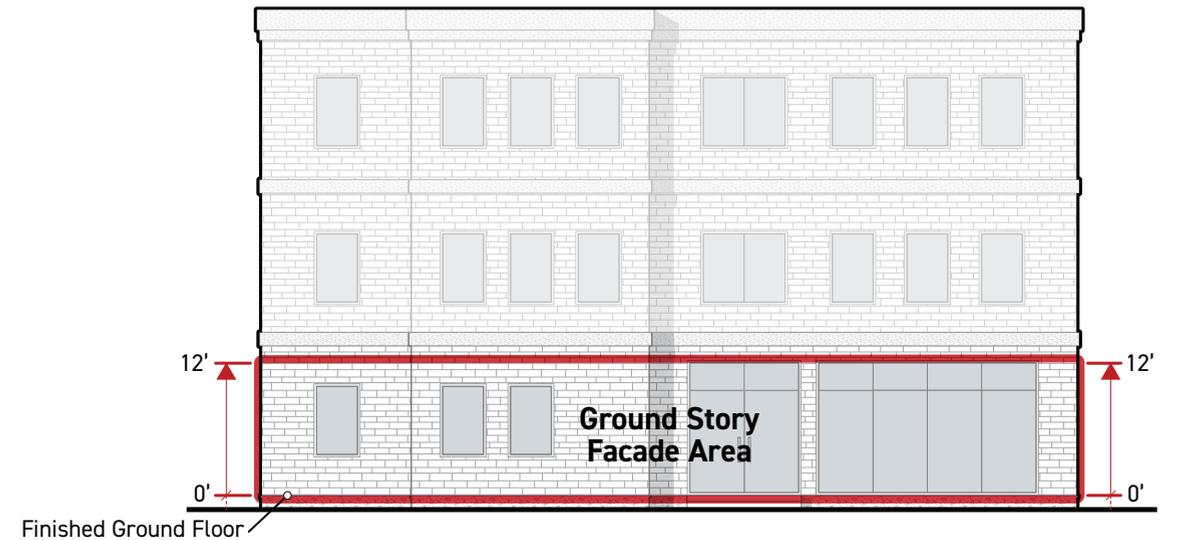
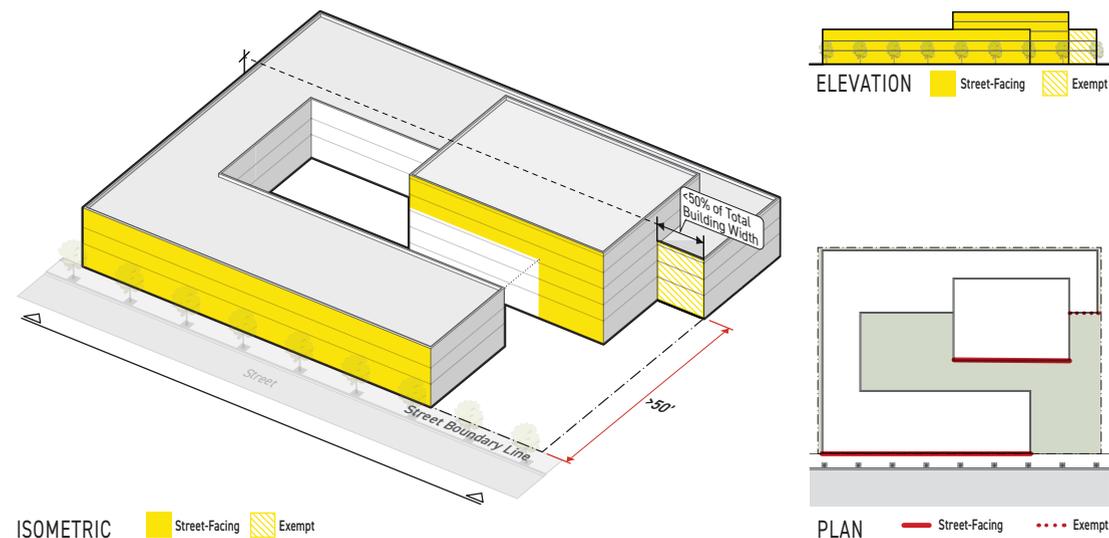
- + **Minimum and maximum finished floor elevation** promotes “eyes” on the street, increases the perception of safety and encourages visual connections between the public realm and the exterior of a building
- + Applies to buildings that **contain habitable space within 20 feet of a street**
- + Don't want **ground floors too far below or above grade**



BUILDING STANDARDS: WINDOWS

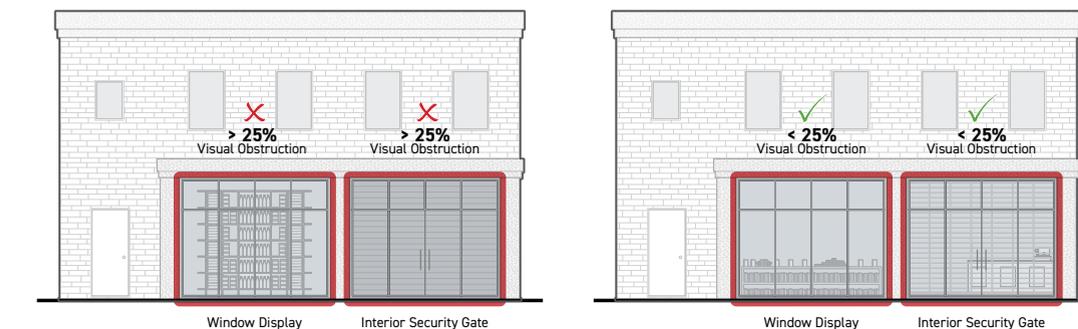
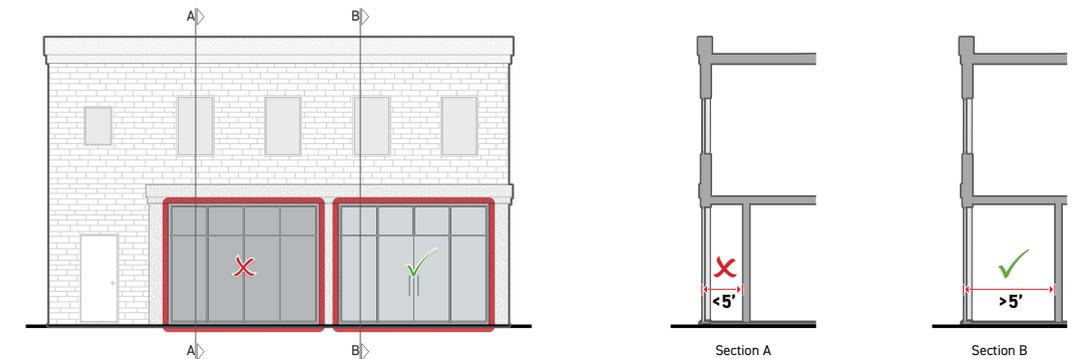
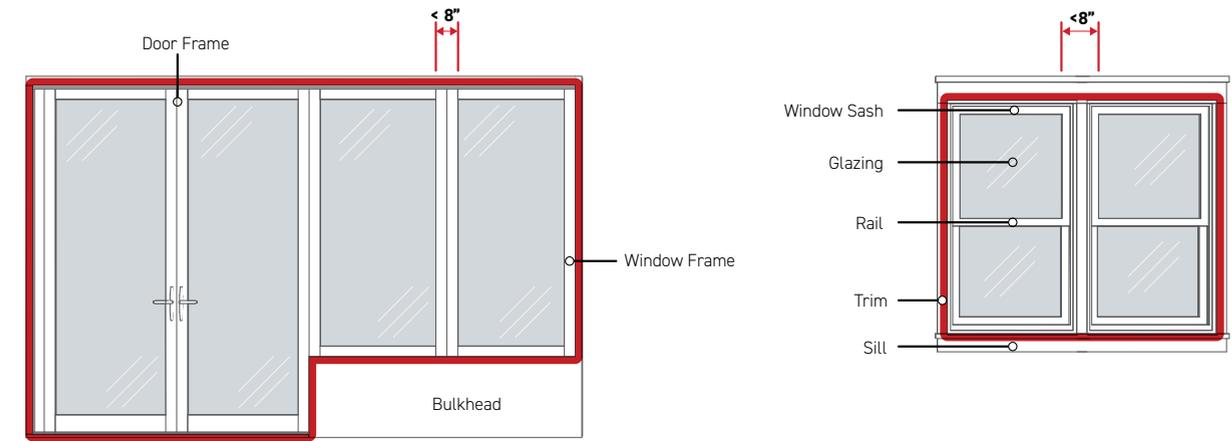
Intent: To help provide visual interest along the street by encouraging visual connections between the public realm and the interior of buildings.

- + Applies to **street-facing building facades** only
- + **Commercial** ground floor **transparency** measured from **0 to 12 feet** from the top of the finished floor
- + **Residential** ground floor **transparency** measured from **1.5 to 8 feet** from the top of the finished floor



BUILDING STANDARDS: WINDOWS

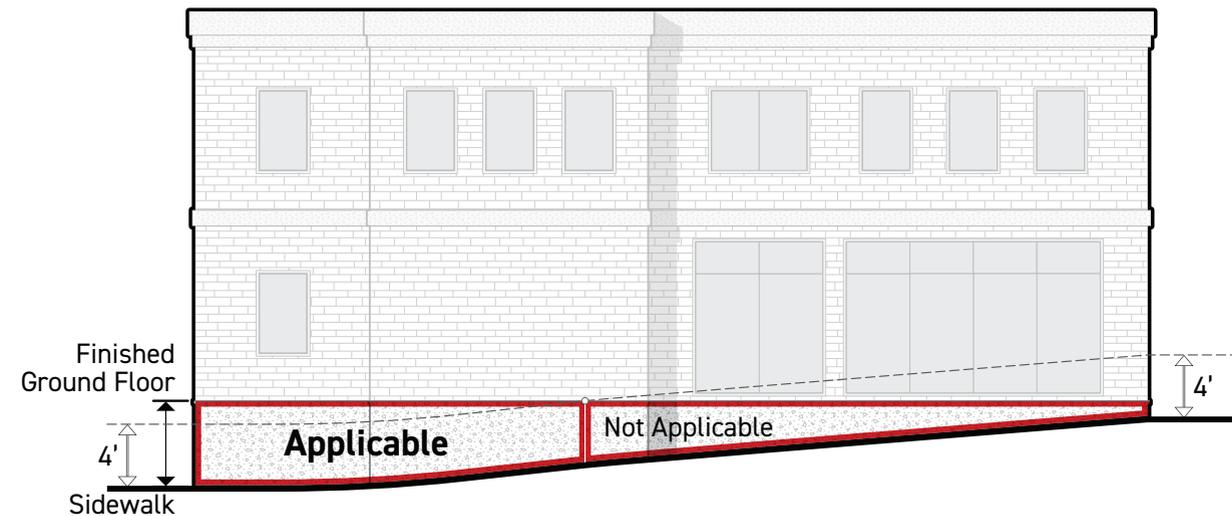
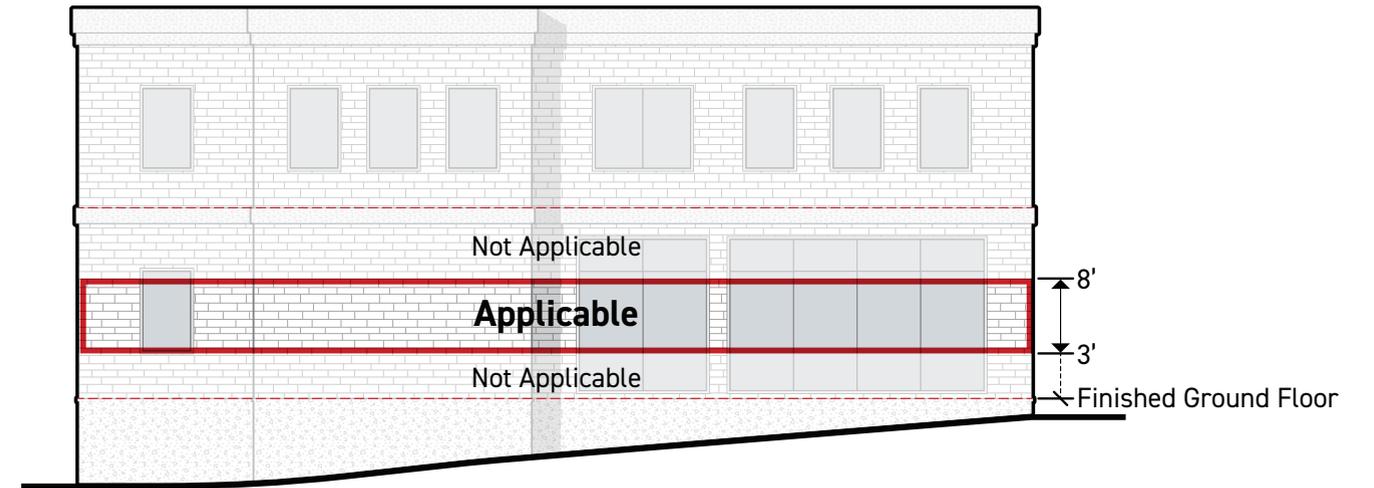
- + Muntins, sashes and other **elements less than 8 inches width may count toward transparent area**
- + Temporary covers like blinds are allowed, but **permanent screens are limited to no more than 25% of the window area**
- + Interior walls **must be located at least 5 feet** behind the window area
- + Interior displays or other obscuring features **cannot cover more than 25% of any window or door area**



BUILDING STANDARDS: BLANK WALLS

Intent: To help break up blank walls along the street by encouraging visual interest along the sidewalks.

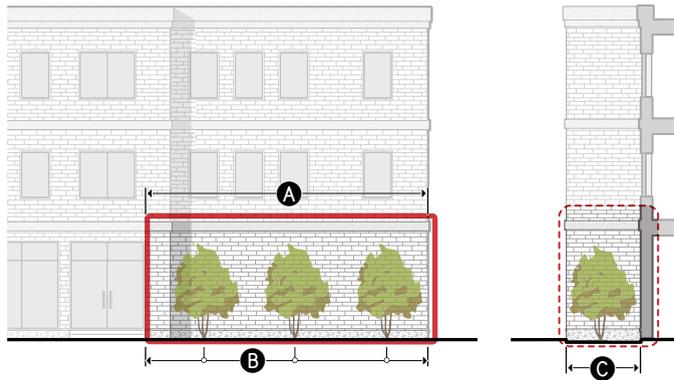
- + Applies to **ground story street-facing building facades** only
- + Measured between **3 and 8 feet above the finished ground floor**
- + Also applies to foundation walls that are exposed **4 feet in height or more above finished grade**
- + Allows for alternative treatments: **trees, living walls, public art, foundation planting, and pedestrian access**



BUILDING STANDARDS: BLANK WALLS

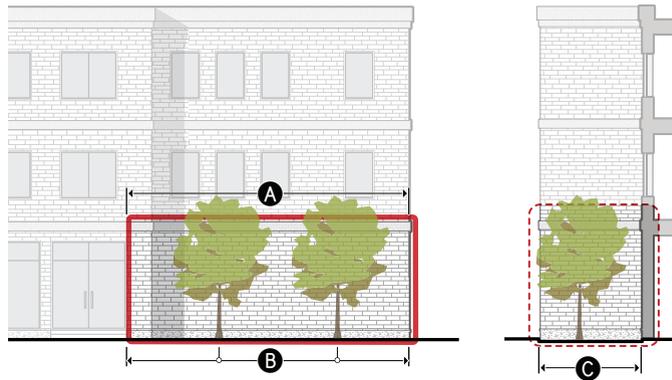
SMALL OR MEDIUM TREES

Small trees planted between a ground story facade with no window or door openings and the public realm.



LARGE TREES

Large trees planted between a ground story facade with no window or door openings and the public realm.



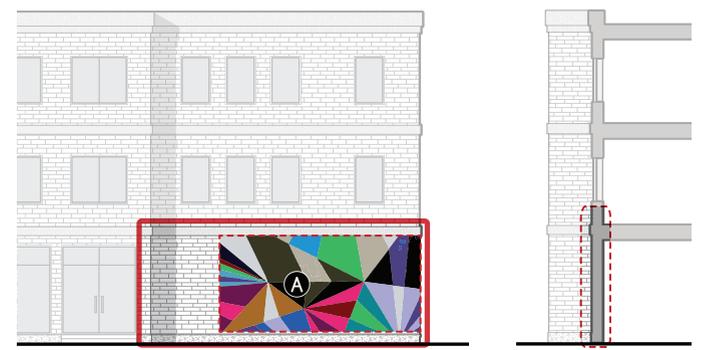
LIVING WALL

A permanently fixed assembly located between a ground story facade with no window or door openings and the public realm that supports plants, their growing medium, and irrigation.



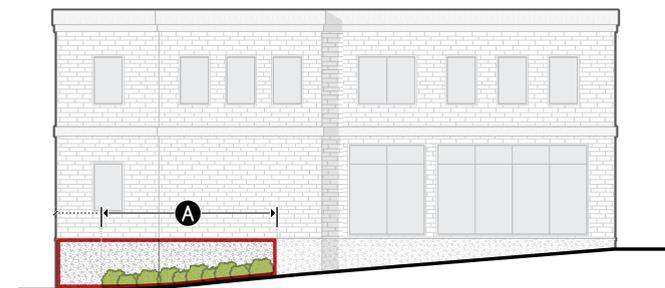
PUBLIC ART

A noncommercial image attached to the blank wall and is sufficiently different from the building facade. Public art must be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator to confirm any mural or art display is not considered a sign.



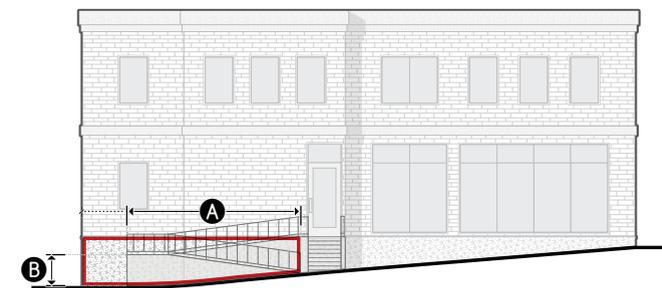
FOUNDATION PLANTING

Screening plants located between a foundation wall with no window or door openings and the public realm.



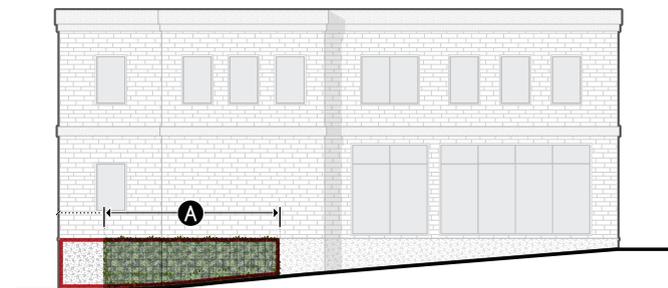
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Stairs or ramps providing pedestrian access to a street-facing entrance located between a foundation wall with no window or door openings and the public realm.



LIVING WALL

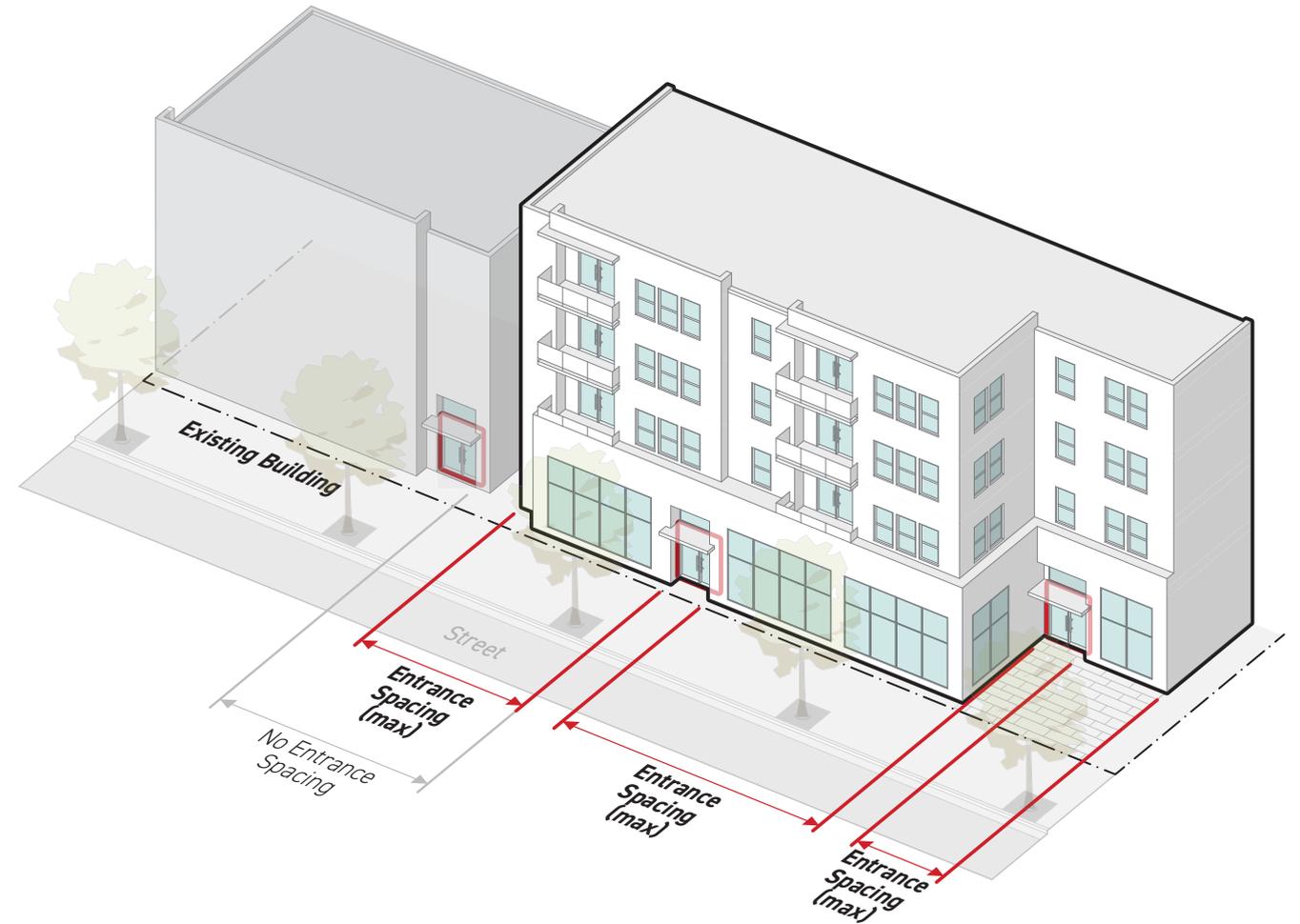
A structure permanently attached to a foundation wall with no window or door openings that supports climbing plants.



BUILDING STANDARDS: DOORS

Intent: To orient buildings to the street and promote greater use and activation of the sidewalk by limiting distance without physical connections between the sidewalk and the interior of buildings.

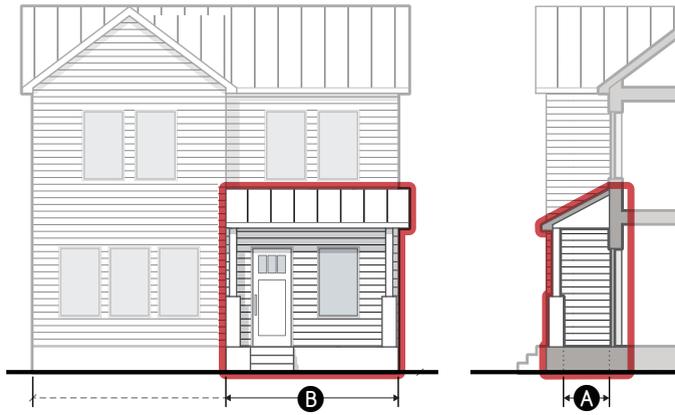
- + Applies to **ground story street-facing building facades** only
- + **Maximum door spacing must be met for each building and abutting buildings** on a lot or within a project site, but are not applicable to buildings unrelated to the project
- + Each street-facing entry must have an **entry feature**
- + A building entry **doesn't have face the street directly, but the entry feature has to**



BUILDING STANDARDS: ENTRY FEATURES

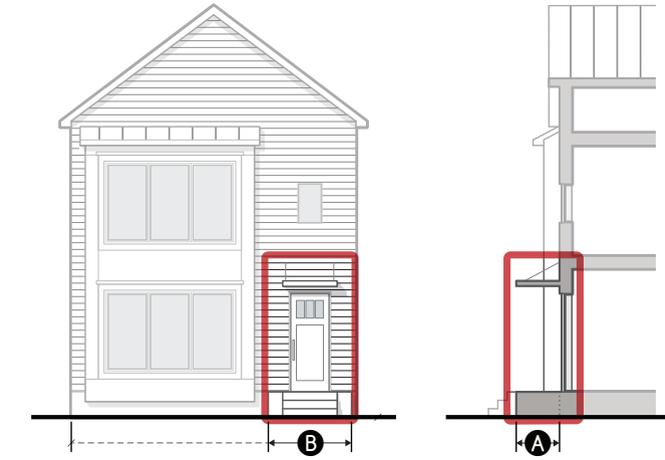
PORCH

A wide, raised platform, projecting in front of a street-facing entrance, that is entirely covered but not enclosed.



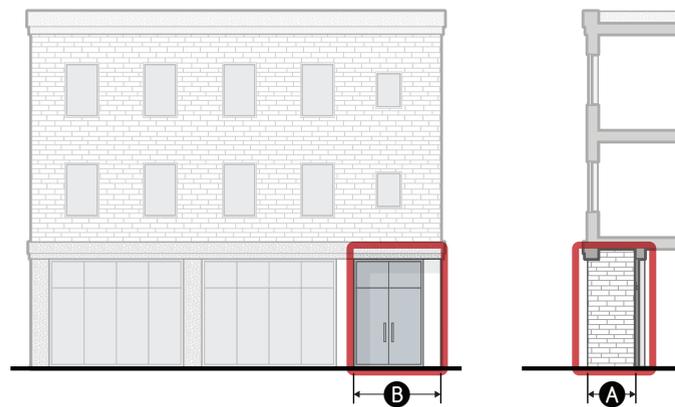
RAISED ENTRY

A raised platform accessed from an exterior staircase, providing covered access to a street-facing entrance.



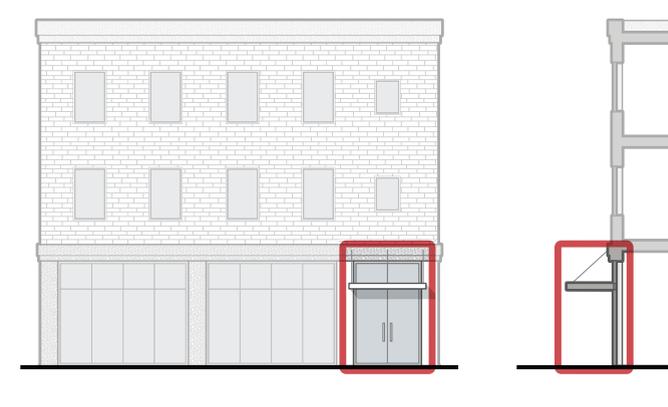
RECESSED ENTRY

A space set behind the primary facade plane providing sheltered access to a street-facing entrance.



COVERED ENTRY

A space that provides sheltered access to an at-grade street-facing entrance with an overhead projecting structure.



FORECOURT

A yard screened with a short wall, fence or hedge that provides significant privacy for occupants located on the ground story, near sidewalk grade.



DRAFT ADMINISTRATION SECTION DISCUSSION

SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS

ROLE

- + Exceptions are granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals
- + Unlike variances, they are not based on hardship
- + Exceptions must meet certain provisions established in the code and align with an intent statement

CURRENT EXAMPLES

- + Lot width and area
- + Coverage
- + Setback requirements
- + Fences and walls for corner properties
- + Enlargement or reestablishment of non-conforming uses
- + Building height in certain contexts

SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS

POTENTIAL CHANGES

- + The Zoning Administrator could potentially offer up to 10% flexibility from certain numeric standards, so long as intent is met and adjacent properties are not negatively impacted
- + 10-25% flexibility on standard could be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals

Discussion

- + What do you think of this approach? Do you have any concerns? What standards should exceptions apply to?
- + What conditions should have to be met?

Standards Potentially Affected

- + Lot width (RD and RC)
- + Building coverage
- + Setbacks
- + Building height and width
- + Build-to
- + Story height
- + Amenity space
- + Active depth
- + Blank wall width
- + Permitted sign area and individual sign dimensions