

BUILDING FORM

A buildings form establishes the scale in relation to public spaces and in relation to other buildings. Cumulatively the forms of buildings along a block shape the public streetscape. The primary elements of building form are:

- building orientation;
- building setback; and
- height and massing.

Orientation. *Orientation refers to the buildings directional relationship with the streetscape or other public spaces.*

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Setback. Setback refers to the position of a building on a lot. Often times it is described as a outward limit, beyond which buildings cannot be placed and within which buildings can be placed anywhere. However, in framing quality public realms it is more important that building forms create a consistent set back or “build to” line, so that important public places are shaped by buildings and that activities within these buildings animate these public places.

New Construction:

Rehabilitation:

Height and Massing. Height and massing combine to achieve the physical size of a building. It has two components: the actual measured height; and the perceived height and size achieved by varying the massing of a buildings outer form.

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FAÇADE DESIGN

The design of a building’s façade creates the relationship with the streetscape, and in particular to pedestrians along the streetscape. Façade designs with greater “permeability” can support a more active public realm as the activities within buildings and activities beyond the building each

enhance the other. Three basic details are critical to designing facades that support the streetscape and pedestrian activity:

- architectural bays;
- articulation and transparency; and
- building entrances.

Architectural Bays. Architectural bays are used to further break up the massing elements of a buildings form. A repetition of similar patterns within this form creates recognizable elements that relate better to pedestrians. In this manner, very large buildings are broken down in scale – first breaking the form into separate masses, and second breaking these masses into architectural bays – so that the relate more to the scale of a person.

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Articulation and Transparency. Articulation and transparency establish the relationship and transition from the outside spaces to inside spaces. It also creates consistent design across the several architectural bays or masses that may make up a building form. The first element articulation refers to patterns of repeating elements such as windows, ornamentation, or other design elements that can be used to emphasize and enhance particular architectural bays or massing elements of a building. The second element transparency refers to the degree of visibility between the outside spaces and inside spaces. It can be actual visibility – as in storefront windows that are open to viewing; or it can be perceived visibility – as in a shuttered or louvered opening that could be opened or permit some degree of more discrete visibility

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Entrances. Entrances animate the streetscape with people. Well designed facades will not complete a streetscape unless more frequent building entrances establish the physical and functional relationship with the street. Entrances also contribute to the other two elements of façade design – an enhanced entrance element can become one of a buildings architectural bays; and a series of entrances along a streetscape establish better articulation and transparency.

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SITE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

The design of access and circulation for a site must account for vehicle traffic in a manner that least disrupts pedestrian activity to and immediately surrounding a building. In a sense, every trip begins and ends with a pedestrian, so this element of site design is critical regardless of a buildings context. Appropriate site design requires attention to three details of site access and circulation:

- curb cuts;
- parking location; and
- pedestrian paths.

Curb cuts. Curb cuts provide vehicle access to the interior of building sites. This access interrupts the aesthetics and the pedestrian function of the public streetscape. Curb cuts on any single site should be balanced with other transportation interests and with a view of the entire function of the surrounding block and corridor.

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Parking Location. Parking areas are important elements for the functioning of viable building sites, but they are typically not sites where people spend time. When repeated across sites or build on a large scale, they have a cumulative negative effect on the corridor. Parking areas should be located on discrete portions of sites, consolidated into smaller concentrated areas, and otherwise screened from the public streetscape.

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Pedestrian Paths. Pedestrian paths enhance the circulation provided by the public streetscape. These paths can include more direct connections to building entrances, connections to parking areas or useable open spaces, or through-block connections and connections to adjacent sites when these connections are lacking in adjacent streetscape design.

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OPEN SPACE DESIGN

Open space design maximizes the utility and aesthetic contributions for un-built portions of the site. For urban corridors open space design should focus primarily on strengthening the relationship of sites to the public streetscape. Therefore, the design and not necessarily the quantity of space is most important. Open space design should include attention to two elements:

- site screening; and
- open civic spaces.

Site Screening. Site screening uses landscape and open areas to minimize the aesthetic or environmental impacts of utility areas of the site. These areas should be designed in the most efficient manner possible to maximize development opportunities in the corridor.

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Open Civic Spaces. Open civic spaces are an extension of the public streetscape. They should be designed to provide space for people to congregate, transition from public areas of the streetscape, and emphasize important elements of the building as it relates to the streetscape.

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Signs

Land Uses