DT Code Update Subcommittee – White Paper #7

Meeting 4/11/2022 at 3p.m. SEED Lab Downtown

Please note that our next meeting will be both in-person and online

Overview

At the March 29, 2022 meeting, the working group discussed dimensional standards and began discussion design standards. General consensus seemed to favor moving towards a simpler design approach which reduces the number of design features required, but requires them for all buildings. This moves away from a bonus-based system in favor of a simpler approach which provides more certainty.

Current Tasks

Please consider the following and bring any questions or comments to the meeting:

1. **Design Features:** Which are the most important features which should be required for all buildings? Options include but are not limited to:
    - Glass/transparency
    - Stepbacks on upper floors
    - Building articulation
    - Building/massing/wind elements

2. **Height Thresholds:** This version of the working draft will have different height thresholds above which certain types of design elements will be required. Are the proposed height thresholds for different design features acceptable?

3. **Street Frontage Contexts:** At the last meeting we discussed basing frontage requirements (including the design standards above or others) on street context. While we initially discussed a map showing three types of streets (mixed use street, residential street, pedestrian oriented street) with different requirements, the current draft of the downtown plan also includes another set of NACTO guidelines for two categories of major and minor streets (see pages 106-107 of the plan). We propose using these two categories instead of three.

4. **Leaving ROW improvements to the ROW manager:** this draft moves towards any street/sidewalk improvements becoming the responsibility of the ROW manager.

The Downtown Plan can be found here: About, Documents, & FAQs | Our Downtown Anchorage
Questions: Kristine.bunnell@anchorageak.gov

ANC Downtown Code Working Group
Monday, April 11, 2022 3:00 PM-4:30 PM
Anchorage SEED Lab: 111 W 6th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501
If you prefer to join the meeting online, please use this link

CHAPTER 21.11: DOWNTOWN

21.11.60

TABLE 21.11-4: TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS – DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS
(Additional standards apply where specified below.)

Use	Lot Dimensions[1]		Minimum Setbacks (ft)			Building Bulk and Height[2,3]	
	Min. Area (sf)	Min. Width (ft)	Front	Side	Rear	Max. Lot Coverage	Maximum Height (ft)
B-2A: Central Business District Core							
All Uses			N/A	0 or at least 5	N/A	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
B-2B: Central Business District, Intermediate							
All Uses	6,000	50	N/A	0 or at least 5		Unrestricted	Unrestricted
B-2C: Central Business District, Periphery							
All Uses	6,000			0 or at least 5		Unrestricted	84

[1] For other lot dimensional standards, see section 21.08.030K.
[2] See section 21.11.070C for building step back requirements.
[3] Due to proximity to Town Square Park and Peratrovich Park, maximum height is limited for Blocks 41 through 43 and 69 through 71, Anchorage Original Townsite. See section 21.11.060E. for explanation of limitations.

C. Solar Access Protection Standards

a. Town Square Park and Peratrovich Park: In addition to the requirements of Table 21.11-4 and subsection 21.11.060B., the maximum height of structures in Blocks 41 through 43 and Blocks 69 through 71, Anchorage Original Townsite, shall be as shown in Table 21.11-7.

Table 21.11-7: Max. Height Near Town Square Park and Peratrovich Park	
Block 41	Southwest quarter: 115 ft.

	Southeast quarter: 85 ft.
Block 42	South half: 55 ft.
Block 43	Southwest quarter: 85 ft. Southeast quarter: 115 ft.
Block 69	Northwest quarter: 115 ft. Northeast quarter: 85 ft. South half: 200 ft.
Block 70	North half: 55 ft. South half: 230 ft.
Block 71	Northwest quarter: 85 ft. Northeast quarter: 115 ft. South half: 200 ft.

b. The director may waive the height limit for a structure that will not cast a shadow on Town Square Park (Block 51, Anchorage Original Townsite) or Peratrovich Park (Block 42, Anchorage Original Townsite) that is greater than that cast by existing structures from April 21 to August 21 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., solar time.

c. Maximum heights outlined in Table 21.11-4 are subject to the maximum heights in Table 21.11-7.

d. With the concurrence of the director, an owner of a lot in Blocks 41 through 43 and Blocks 69 through 71, Anchorage Original Townsite, may transfer the amount of building floor area allowed on that lot under subsections B., C., and D. of this section, less the amount allowed under this subsection E., to one or more lots in the DT districts not subject to this subsection E. Such a transfer is subject to the height limits in 21.06.030D.9., Airport Height Regulations.

i. Applicant(s) for a floor area transfer under this subsection shall provide the documentation necessary to determine the impacts of such a transfer, as required on a form provided by the department.

ii. The owner of the sending and receiving properties shall enter into a written agreement with the Municipality documenting the amount of floor area entitlement transferred. The Municipality shall record the agreement at the district recorder's office as a covenant that runs with the land for both the sending and receiving properties. Recordation of the agreement shall take place prior to the issuance of any

entitlement for a development on the sending and receiving properties.

2. Elsewhere in Downtown:

[new standards may be added here]

(AO 2020-38, 4-28-20)

21.11.070 DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS

A. Purpose

The development and design standards set forth in section 21.11.070 apply to the physical layout and design of development within the Downtown (DT) districts. These provisions govern the physical characteristics of a development and its relationship with adjacent properties and surrounding downtown environment to implement the Anchorage Downtown District Plan, avoid potential impacts on neighboring properties and the downtown environment, enhance the appearance, character, activity, and economic vitality of downtown, and provide a downtown environment that reflects our northern lifestyle, diverse climate, and regional identity.

B. Applicability

This section is applicable to all development in the DT districts. The generally applicable provisions of chapter 21.07 shall apply unless specifically provided otherwise, and the provisions in this section shall govern in cases of conflict.

C. Building Step-backs and Towers

1. General

a. The purpose of the building step-back in the DT districts is to provide interesting buildings that create a positive interaction with the street to reflect northern climate aspects in the visible and built form. Step-backs provide the opportunity to reduce the adverse environmental impacts of tall buildings on the downtown streetscape.

2. Step back standards

a. Minimum step back requirements:

i. Buildings shall step back at these heights in these zones. the remainder of the building above that height shall be subject to 21.11.070C.3 Tower Standards.

a. B2-A: 72 feet
b. B2-B: 60 feet
c. B2-C: 48 feet

ii. The building exterior envelope shall step back a minimum of 20’ from the building edge at the heights noted in 21.11.070C.2a. No part of the building envelope shall protrude into or over the stepped back area except balconies which may protrude over the stepped back area a maximum of 50% of the step back distance from the building edge.

iii. The building step back shall occur on all building edges adjacent to a street, alley, or exterior public space such as a park or plaza.

iv. At least 60% of all building step backs shall be accessible to building occupants as outdoor space and shall be designed to meet the needs of the building occupants with paving, seating, and landscaping.

3. Tower standards

a. Development with multiple towers on one property, towers shall be located a minimum of 40 feet from each other.

b. Where a new tower is proposed adjacent to an existing structure that is taller than the height at which a minimum step back is required, the new tower shall be located a minimum of 40 feet from the existing adjacent structure.

c. Tower Mass Reductions: Tower mass reductions are intended to allow more flexibility in the building design while providing increased solar access..

i. Tower mass reductions shall be measured using the gross floor area of the first building floor occurring at the required building step back and shall include all floors occurring within the height ranges noted below.

a. Calculation Example: For a tower in the B2C district with a gross floor area of 10,000 square feet at the required step back and with two floors occurring within the 72' to 96' height range, the tower mass reduction will be 2,000 square feet gross for those two floors combined ((10,000 x 2) x 0.10 = 2,000). The gross area reduction may be applied to the floors individually in any combination as long as their combined gross area does not exceed 18,000 square feet (10,000 + 10,000 - 2,000 = 18,000). If only one floor occurred within that height range, the tower mass reduction will be 1,000 square feet for that floor, for a total area of 9,000 square feet gross allowed for that floor.

iii. Tower mass reductions shall occur at the following heights and percentages per zoning district:

Table 21.11-8: Tower Mass Reduction Standards – All Downtown Zoning Districts			
	B2A	B2B	B2C
72' to 96'	N/A	N/A	10%
96' to 132'	N/A	10%	N/A
132' to 168'	10%	25%	N/A
168' to 192'	20%	30%	N/A
≥193'	30%	50%	N/A

D. Building Articulation

1. General

The purpose of the building articulation in the DT districts is to provide visual interest and variety in the building façade while helping to reduce potential environmental impacts of tall buildings.

2. Minimum standards

a. Main Entryways shall be recessed a minimum of 6 feet at a minimum width that is equal to 20 percent of the building's street frontage.

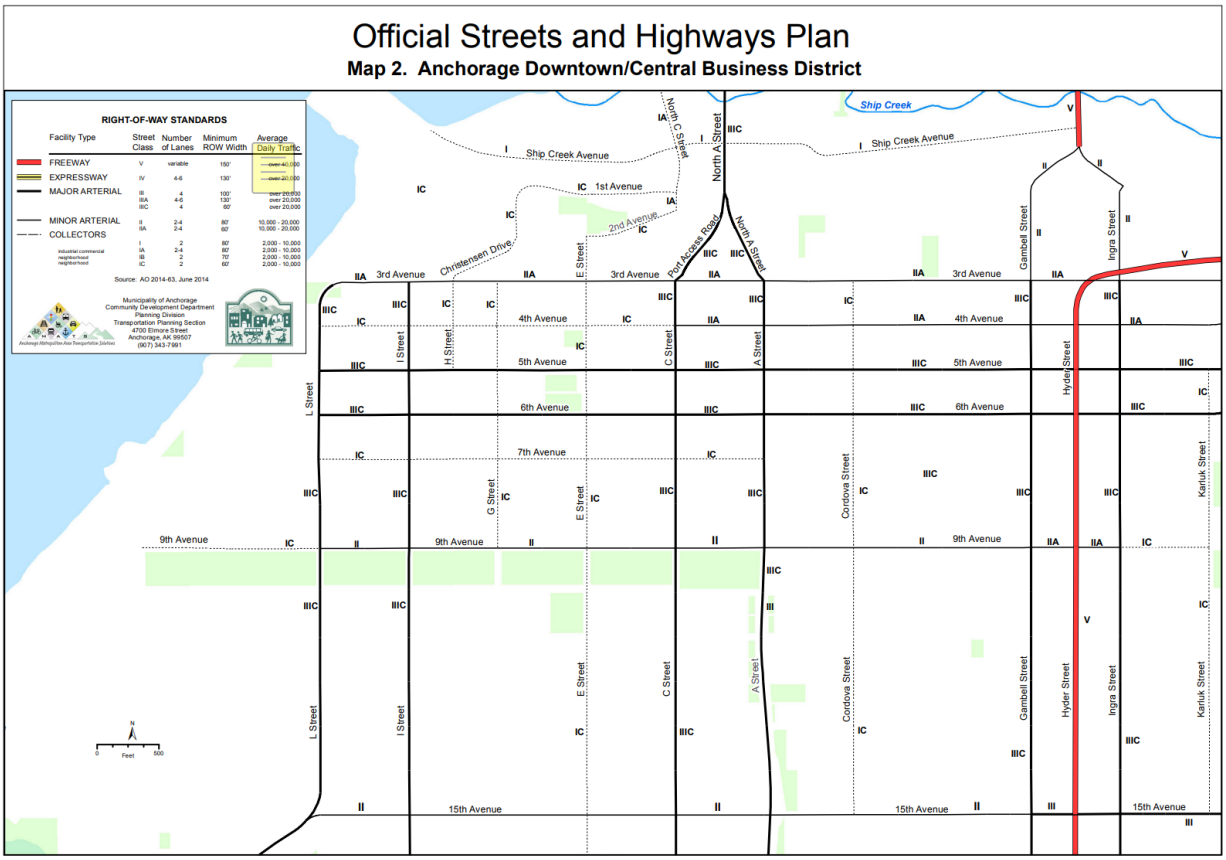
b. Wall modulation. Each building elevation that faces a street or public space shall be modulated. The wall and foundation line shall be offset at intervals so that there is at least one offset every 40 feet of wall length that varies the depth of the building wall by a minimum of 3 feet. Offsets shall comprise at least 20 percent of the length of the elevation, for at least 60 percent of the building height up to the minimum step back height.

E. Frontage Standards

Insert the Major/Minor street map from the Master Plan

Major or Minor streets shall be designated according to the Official Streets and Highways Plan or the most recent guidance for the area.

Map 21-11-X



3. Ground-Floor Windows

a. *Intent*

Blank walls on the street-facing ground floor of buildings are limited as follows, in order to provide connection between activities occurring inside the structure to an adjacent sidewalk.

b. *Standard*

Ground-floor street-facing exterior walls located 20 feet or closer to a street ROW shall meet the window standards in table 21.11-8. Windows shall provide visual access to interior activity or circulation spaces. Display windows with opaque back walls will not be counted toward the visual access requirements. Walls of parking structures are exempt.

Table 21.11-9: Window Standards – All Downtown Zoning Districts			
	Frontage on Major Streets	Frontage on Minor Streets	All other street or alley frontages[1]
A. Minimum percentage of the length of street-facing ground-floor wall to consist of visual access windows:	70%	40%	25%
B. Minimum percentage of the street-facing ground-floor wall area to consist of visual access windows:	60%	30%	12%
C. Minimum percentage of wall area above ground-floor to consist of visual access windows:	30%	25%	12%

2. Parking lot landscaping requirements

a. The perimeter of a parking area abutting a lot in a residential district shall utilize the following schedule.

i. Institutional, commercial or industrial uses adjoining a residential use: Visual enhancement landscaping and a screening fence.

ii. Residential uses adjoining a residential district: Visual enhancement landscaping, or a screening fence and an area landscaped with parking lot interior landscaping equal to five percent of the paved surface of the parking area including parking circulation aisles and appurtenant driveways.

iii. a parking area serving only a single-family, two-family, or three-family dwelling is exempt.

b. ***Parking lot landscaping for parking lots with 15 or more spaces***

i. Visual enhancement landscaping shall be planted on the perimeter of the parking area abutting a lot line, or a screening fence shall be placed on the perimeter of the parking area abutting a lot line and an area equal to at least five percent of the paved surface of the parking area, including parking circulation aisles and appurtenant driveways, shall be devoted to parking lot interior landscaping. Exceptions are:

(A) At approved points of pedestrian and vehicle access; and

(B) Adjacent to lots being developed under a common development plan, where the director waives the requirement.

ii. A foundation planting bed or walkway, or both, at least four feet wide shall separate the parking area, including circulation aisles and appurtenant driveways, from any building on the same lot.

iii. In addition to the landscaping required under subsections i. and ii. Of this subsection, parking lot interior landscaping shall be planted within the interior of a parking lot containing more than 60 spaces. The area devoted to parking lot interior landscaping shall equal at least five percent of the paved surface of the parking area including parking circulation aisles and appurtenant driveways.

iv. The vehicle overhang allowance area of parking spaces may extend into required landscaping areas by up to two feet, provided the planting bed beyond the overhang is at least six feet wide.

3. Screening

a. Loading areas, vehicle and equipment storage areas, and service areas shall be screened. Screening shall take the form of a fence, wall or vegetation, or a combination of these.

b. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened as provided in subsection 21.07.080G.4.c.

c. Outdoor refuse collection receptacles shall be screened as provided in subsection 21.07.080G.2.

G. Private Open Space

All Residential – Household Living Uses in the downtown districts shall provide private open space as established in Section 21.07.030. With the exception of developments along 8th and 9th avenues between C and L streets due to this area having ready access to the Park Strip.

For townhouse-style structures, the required open space may be provided as either individual or common private open space, except where common open space is required in subsection 21.07.110F.2. For multifamily-style and mixed use construction, at least half the required open space shall be provided as common private open space, and no individual private open space is required. Required open space for residential uses shall not be combined with required open space for nonresidential uses.

Development shall be required to set aside private open space according to the following minimum requirements: 100 square feet of private open space per dwelling unit, with exceptions from dimensional and development standards as outlined below.

Exemptions from the Section 21.07.030 standards:

1. The minimum inside dimension of ground-level individual private open space is reduced from 15 feet to 10 feet. The minimum inside dimension of common private open space is reduced from 18 feet to 10 feet. The 10-foot dimension may be reduced by three feet where abutting required site perimeter landscaping on the site, as long as the open space and the landscaping are not separated by a fence or other separating feature.

2. Common open space on balconies, roofs, decks, stoops, and unenclosed porches that have no less than two 20-foot inside dimension may count toward the open space requirement

2. Individual private open space on balconies, roofs, decks, stoops, and unenclosed porches that have no less than one 10-foot inside dimension may count toward the open space requirement, except that balconies, decks, stoops, and unenclosed porches with dimensions of less than 10 feet and containing at least 20 square feet may be counted for up to 50 percent of the required private open space area. These standards replace the requirements of 21.07.030D.1.ii. and iii. for these spaces.

3. Multifamily and mixed-use development in the DT districts is exempt from the requirement in subsection 21.07.030B.1. for at least half of the required open space to be provided as common private open space. Required private open space in the DT districts may be any mix of common and/or individual private open space.

4. Multifamily and mixed-use development in the DT districts is exempt from the prohibition in subsection 21.07.030D.1.a. against counting setbacks with slopes over 10 percent towards required private open space.

5. Multifamily and mixed-use development in the DT districts is exempt from the requirement in subsection 21.07.030D.2.b.i. for at least half of the required common private open space to be contiguous.

6. Multifamily and mixed-use development in the DT districts is exempt from the limitation in subsection 21.07.030D.2.b.iv. that no more than 25 percent of the total required open space area may be developed for active recreation.

H. Off-Street Parking and Loading

1. Amount of parking

No off-street parking is required for any development in the DT districts.

2. Landscaping

Parking that is provided shall be landscaped in accordance with 21.11.070D.1.a. and 21.11.070D.1.b.

3. Off-street parking and loading design standards

Off-street parking and/or loading shall comply with all standards for off-street parking and loading in section 21.07.090, except that:

a. Permanent parking not located within a setback from projected rights of way may utilize the alternative parking angle, stall, and aisle dimensions outlined in Table 21.11-10. An alternative parking site plan shall be submitted and approved as part of the applicable land use permit process.

b. Permanent parking not located within a setback from projected rights of way may utilize the compact parking angle, stall, and aisle dimensions outlined in Table 21.11-11, provided the parking area is used exclusively for employee parking for periods in excess of four consecutive hours, and no more than 30 percent of the total number of spaces is designed for compact cars. An alternative parking site

plan shall be submitted and approved as part of the applicable land use permit process.

TABLE 21.11-10: ALTERNATIVE PARKING ANGLE, STALL, AND AISLE DIMENSIONS

Parking Angle (degrees)	Space Width	Space Depth (Vehicle Projection)	Aisle Width 1-way	Typical Parking Bay Width (Module)	Interlock Reduction	Overhang Allowance
45	8’ 4”	17’ 4”	12′ 3″	46′ 11″	2’ 0”	2’ 0”
50	8’ 4”	18’ 0”	12′ 9″	48′ 9″	1′ 10″	2′ 1″
60	8’ 4”	18’ 10”	14′ 3″	51′ 11″	1′ 4″	2′ 3″
70	8’ 4”	19’ 2”	16′ 1″	54′ 5″	0′ 10″	2′ 5″
75	8’ 4”	19’ 0”	17′ 6″	55′ 6″	0′ 8″	2′ 6″
90*	8’ 4”	18’ 0”	22′ 6″	58′ 6″	N/A	2′ 8″

*The 90-degree parking angle dimensions assume a two-way traffic flow

TABLE 21.11-111: COMPACT PARKING ANGLE, STALL, AND AISLE DIMENSIONS

Parking Angle (degrees)	Space Type	Space Width	Space Depth (Vehicle Projection)	Aisle Width 1-way	Typical Parking Bay Width (Module)	Interlock Reduction	Overhang Allowance
45	CO	7′ 7″	15′ 2″	10′ 9″	41′ 1″	1′ 6″	1′ 6″
	STD	8′ 4″	18′ 4″	13′ 0″	49′ 8″	2′ 0″	2′ 3″
50	CO	7′ 7″	15′ 8″	11′ 2″	42′ 6″	1′ 4″	1′ 7″
	STD	8′ 4″	19′ 2″	13′ 6″	51′ 0″	2′ 0″	2′ 4″
60	CO	7′ 7″	16′ 4″	12′ 6″	45′ 2″	1′ 0″	1′ 8″
	STD	8′ 4″	20′ 0″	15′ 0″	55′ 0″	1′ 6″	2′ 6″
70	CO	7′ 7″	16′ 5″	14′ 1″	46′ 11″	0′ 8″	1′ 10″
	STD	8′ 4″	20′ 4″	17′ 0″	57′ 8″	1′ 0″	2′ 8″
75	CO	7′ 7″	16′ 6″	16′ 4″	49′ 11″	0′ 6″	1′ 10″
	STD	8′ 4″	20′ 2″	18′ 0″	58′ 4″	0′ 9″	2′ 9″
90*	CO	7′ 7″	15′ 6″	19′ 0″	50′ 0″	N/A	2′ 0″
	STD	8′ 4″	19′ 0″	23′ 0″	61′ 0″	N/A	3′ 0″

CO: Compact car.
STD: Standard car.
* The 90-degree parking angle dimensions assume a two-way traffic flow.

(AO 2020-38, 4-28-20; AO 2020-93, 10-1-20)

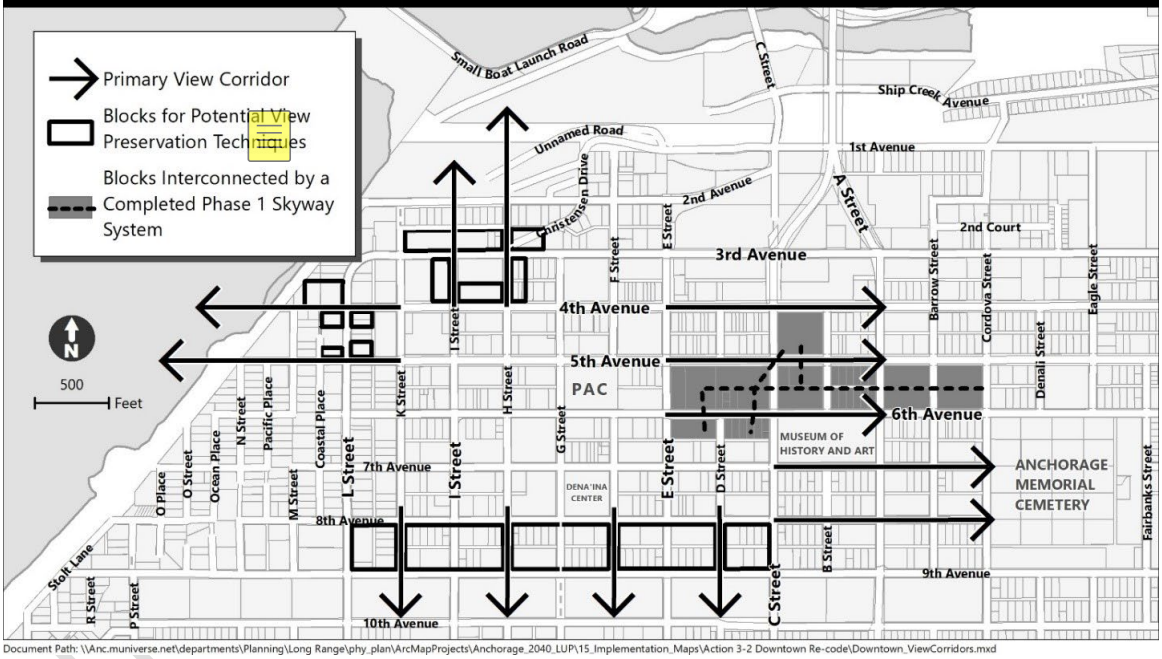
21.11.080 SKYWALKS

A. Supplemental Conditional Use Standards

Skywalks in the DT districts are subject to the conditional use process in 21.03.080. In addition to the conditional use approval criteria in 21.03.080D, the approval of a conditional use for a skywalk shall consider if:

1. The skywalk primarily functions to serve pedestrian circulation needs;
2. The skywalk minimizes adverse effects upon the pedestrian improvements shown on Map 21.11-1 in subsection 21.11.070C.2. and the view corridors shown on Map 21.11-2 below;
3. The public benefits of the skywalk exceed the advantages of the street level or underground pedestrian circulation systems that might otherwise exist or be designed to serve the development project; and
4. The skywalk design is compatible with the massing, style, façade, and finishes of the predominant existing, historic, or planned architectural patterns of the street block fronts on which the skywalk is proposed to be constructed.

Map 21.11-2: View Corridor Analysis



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B. Required Documentation

In addition to the relevant conditional use application requirements as determined on a form provided by the department, an applicant seeking a conditional use for a skywalk in the DT districts shall submit the following:

1. A report which discusses the functions, uses, and objectives that the skywalk is designed to serve, and estimates of expected daily pedestrian use of the skywalk for the first year following completion of each project phase, if any, and after final project completion.

2. A project vicinity map, at a scale of one to twenty, showing, within 300 feet of the skywalk:
   a. Pedestrian circulation systems.
   b. Location and type of existing land uses and structures, including building height, ground floor dimensions and utilities.
   c. Locations and widths of dedicated rights-of-way, patent reserves, road easements and reservations, and clear vision triangles.
   d. Pedestrian improvements identified on Map 21.11-1 (in section 21.11.070C.2.) and the view corridors identified on Map 21.11-2 (in section 21.11.080A.).
   e. Photographic record of streets, building facades, and other existing improvements along the street corridor that the skywalk is to be constructed within.

3. A project facility plan, showing:
   a. The configuration of the skywalk.
   b. The vertical and horizontal cross-sections of the skywalk, with at least one cross-section which depicts adjoining structures and ground-floor facilities.
   c. The reflected lighting plans for interior and exterior illumination elements.

4. A visual assessment report illustrating the impact of the skywalk on the street and sidewalk over which it is constructed, as bordered by the facades to the second story of the structures connected by the skywalk. The report shall also illustrate the impact of the skywalk on pedestrian circulation systems and view corridors, as identified on Map 21.11 - 1 (in section 21.11.070C.2.) and Map 21.11 - 2 (in section 21.11.080A.).

5. A skywalk management agreement that includes a security, operations and maintenance plan, as well as the means by which the transparency standards for the skywalk as defined in subsection 21.11.080C.5.e. shall be maintained.

6. For a skywalk located within seismic ground-failure hazard zone 5, an assessment of the effects of seismically induced relative displacement between the two supporting ends of the skywalk. This assessment may be combined with the seismic evaluation requirements of the Building Code for structures.

C. Design Criteria

The following design criteria shall apply to all skywalks in the DT districts, except when the applicant has persuaded the planning and zoning commission that an alternative design is equal or superior to such design criteria:

1. There shall be at least 17.5 feet of clearance between the bottom of the skywalk and the highest elevation of the street surface below it, unless otherwise authorized by the government agency charged with administration of that street.

2. There shall be at least 14.5 feet of clearance between the bottom of the skywalk and the highest elevation of the sidewalk surface below it.

3. The above-grade structural supports of a skywalk shall neither be located within the public right-of-way nor obstruct any required clear vision triangle.

4. Controls for icicle accumulation and glaciation shall be included in the design.

5. A skywalk shall:

   a. Be ADA accessible;
   b. Be an enclosed and climate-controlled structure;
   c. Be limited to one story in height unless the planning and zoning commission finds by clear and convincing evidence that a two-story skywalk is essential to the function of the structures which it will connect;
   d. Have an exterior width no less than 12 feet and no greater than 20 feet;
   e. Have side wall facades of the interior pedestrian space composed of glazing material with 70 percent or greater transparency;
   f. Be level (zero degrees of slope) except for internal sloping ramps which are permitted under the building code and which are not visible from the exterior of the skywalk;
   g. Provide lighting on the underside of the skywalk to adequately illuminate all pedestrian circulation systems that the skywalk spans; and
   h. Include orientation signage and locational guides to the areas in the buildings connected by the skywalk.

6. Skywalks shall not adversely affect or obstruct roadway safety functions or operations, such as clear vision triangles required by this title, traffic signals, signs or roadway maintenance.

7. A clearly identified access route shall be designed between the skywalk and a pedestrian way or sidewalk which it spans.

D. Skywalks in the Phase 1 Skywalk System

A skywalk located within the blocks designated for a Phase 1 Skywalk System on Map 21.11-2 (in section 21.11.080A.), shall be designed in a manner consistent with the following standards:

1. Provide a linkage between first and second level retail uses at interior courts that provide a point of focus in the skywalk system, and where stairs and/or escalators may be provided in a context that attracts people.

2. Provide uniform graphics and minimize sharp angles within corridors. The second floor shall minimize changes in grade and include access with centrally located, publicly-accessible elevators.

3. Provide skywalk corridor widths based on accommodating projected pedestrian volumes.

4. Provide some uniformity in the design of skywalk structures. Skywalks should have an open feeling to allow views, assist in orientation, and relieve the enclosed feeling that may accompany internal corridors.

5. Any changes in floor level are better accommodated by an internal ramping system that does not produce a slope that is visible from outside of the bridge.

E. Authority to Impose Different Standards

Different location, design and operational standards from those recited in this section may be imposed by the planning and zoning commission as necessary to mitigate adverse impacts created by the skywalk.

(AO 2020-38, 4-28-20)