

## NON-RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

The Non-Residential Design Standards found in this section of the Beacon Hill Area NCD Plan are focused on, but not limited to, the interior commercial areas found along W. Hildebrance Ave., Blanco Rd., and Fredericksburg Rd. One of the particularly charming characteristics of this area is a pedestrian-oriented commercial center found along a northern section of Blanco Rd., formerly known as Midtown on Blanco. While other non-residential areas maintain some of the same characteristics, they lack important features – such as consistent use of awnings, accentuating and articulating storefronts and business entries, and orienting buildings and exterior spaces to the pedestrian. These define unique pedestrian-oriented areas.

The intent of the design standards is not to replicate the successful buildings in the neighborhood, but to replicate the spatial arrangement of buildings, parking areas, pedestrian areas, and building configurations that are successful today and desired by the community for the future.

### MIXED –USE

Mixed-use development is encouraged on appropriately zoned properties. Mixed-use development includes residential development above first floor office or commercial space.

### DESIGN STANDARDS

To maintain existing pattern and scale of our neighborhood, mixed-use development is limited to 35 feet maximum height.[CJH(1)]

### LOT SIZE/COVERAGE

Typical lot sizes along Beacon Hill primary commercial corridors are less than ½ acre. It is the intent of these standards to maintain and promote the existing neighborhood development scale.[This also encourages and promotes local neighborhood businesses rather than national chain developments.][CJH(2)]

### DESIGN STANDARDS

Parcels shall not be aggregated to a size greater than ½ acre.

### SETBACKS

Maintaining the street edge is the focus of the setback design standards. This promotes and encourages pedestrian activity along the uniform sidewalk. The design standards also allow for head-in or parallel parking along the street but does not allow a parking lot in front of the building.

### DESIGN STANDARDS

Buildings shall maintain a front setback that shall not exceed 15 feet. Any structure on a corner lot shall be within 15 feet setback along each street-facing facade.[CJH(3)]

### BUILDING HEIGHT

The purpose of these design standards is to maintain a pedestrian scale that is consistent throughout the NCD Area.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

The maximum building height for any new construction or vertical additional on a parcel that abuts Blanco Road, Hildebrand Avenue, or Fredericksburg Road shall be no greater than 35 feet. \*\*\*

Additional height bonuses are not allowed. [CJH(4)]

**PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES - entrances**

Storefronts are a unique feature of traditional urban commercial areas in San Antonio. The storefront entrances of buildings are typically located along primary street façades and are recessed up to four (4) feet from the front facade.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

Entrance doors or alcoves shall be located either along the primary street face or at the corner of a structure facing two primary streets.

Original door openings are to be maintained and no new entrances shall be created unless a space is being reconfigured to change the number of tenant spaces in a multi-tenant structure.

Entrance doors shall be recessed no more than eight (8) feet. Entrance doors shall contain transparent glazing which is not covered, concealed, or filled in with solid building materials.

**OFF STREET PARKING/LOADING**

The purpose of these design standards is creating and maintaining pedestrian-oriented environments in commercial areas.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

With the exception of head-in and parallel parking, parking shall be completely separated from the streetscape. Parking should be located behind buildings. However, side-yard parking may be incorporated if a) at least 50% of the street frontage is occupied by the building, and b) the parking lot is no greater than 65 feet wide along the street. Access drives to parking areas shall be placed on secondary streets, where possible.

Surface parking lots shall be designed to screen parked cars from the public sidewalk. Screening shall be continuous on all public frontages using one or a combination of the following: a) building face, b) low wall with a maximum height of three (3) feet, or fence (no wooden) constructed of materials similar to the building, c) street furniture, or d) landscaping.

Loading and refuse pick-up/delivery areas shall be located at the rear of the structure (ie: not within buffer yards), and screened from view of the streetscape. [CJH(5)]

Shared parking arrangements are preferred and encouraged as a means of reducing the amount of paved surface in the neighborhoods. This can reduce the cost of providing parking while reducing storm water run-off.

Refuse areas must be concealed from view by placing them behind buildings or screening and/or enclosing the containers entirely. [CJH(6)]

**PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES – shading devices**

Shading devices improve the physical environment just outside of the building, but can also make these spaces inviting to the passer-by. Shading devices such as awnings help unify a streetscape, creating a neighborhood identity while providing protection from the elements to the pedestrian.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

A shading device shall be incorporated to provide continuous sun protection at the midpoint of the sidewalk width. This may be accomplished through the use of building orientation, minimum three (3) ft deep building canopy or awning (metal, wood or fabric; no back-lit), or street trees. If using trees to create shade, one tree for every 50 linear feet of building façade facing a street is required.

**PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES – wall openings**

Celebrating the storefront is a common goal for many of the design standards in this section of the NCD Plan. Using storefront windows and doors in combination with awnings or canopies is an effective solution to making buildings and tenant spaces inviting. In contrast, buildings with fewer wall openings and/or no shading devices are substantially under-utilized and frequented less often by pedestrians. The design standards are focused on maintaining window openings and celebrating the storefront on new buildings and buildings that already have this feature.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

The area on a façade dedicated to transparent openings such as windows and doors shall be at least 50% of the first floor front façade, bounded by finished floor to finished ceiling.

When replacing original windows or transoms, the original window forms / profile shall be retained and utilized, using transparent glass.

Transoms, sidelights, and storefront windows shall not be covered, concealed or filled in with solid building materials.

**PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES – windows**

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

Use of non-transparent materials, mirrored glass, Plexiglas or Lexan, and exterior burglar bars on storefronts is prohibited.

Storefront window bases bulkheads shall not be removed, altered, or expanded. When repairing, a material of the same size, scale, proportion and composition shall be used on this building component.

**LIGHTING**

Light pollution is a common problem in Beacon Hill’s commercial areas. The design standards are meant to curtail light pollution, improve the quality of lighting along the commercial corridors, and allow business owners to illuminate their spaces to announce their business and provide security in low light conditions.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

Site lighting shall be shielded so that light sources are not visible from public right-of-way or from adjacent residential property; such that any off-site glare is prevented.

No exterior fluorescent lighting shall be used, unless hidden from view from the streetscape (indirect lighting). Lighting pole standards shall not exceed a height of twelve (12) feet.

## FENCING

Fencing was deemed as an important feature for several reasons, such as security and signifying spatial relationships to buildings. While the capability to install fencing was important to property owners, the single most problematic characteristic of the existing fencing on properties within the NCD area is the visual quality for the materials used for the fencing. The intent of the design standards is to improve the quality of the fencing in the commercial areas while allowing property owners to secure their business or property.

### DESIGN STANDARDS

Any fencing within the front street-facing area shall not exceed a height of 42" [CJH(7)] and any solid fencing material shall not exceed a height of 24".

The use of chain link, Fencecrete, sheet metal, plastic, vinyl, barbed wire, or horizontal metal pipe larger than 2" diameter is prohibited.

Fencing shall have a transparency ratio of 50%, with the exception of any solid fencing material below 24" in height.

## SIGNAGE

Visual clutter created by excess signage and lighting was determined to be an issue of great concern for property owners within the commercial areas of the NCD. While business advertising is critical to helping maintain the economic health of the commercial areas, specific sign requirements are necessary to improve the visual appeal of individual tenant spaces and buildings as well as the overall appeal of the commercial corridors.

### DESIGN STANDARDS

Primary, individual building signage shall be limited to one (1) sign per street façade with spacing no less than a 100 foot radius and shall consist of one of the following:

1. One (1) monument sign that is: a) no greater than eight (8) feet in height; b) does not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights; and c) is no greater than 40 sf in surface area per side (including sign structure), or
2. One (1) pole sign (free-standing) that is: a) no greater than twelve (12) feet in height; b) does not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights; and c) is no greater than 30 sf in surface area per side [CJH(8)]

Additionally, may also consist of one of the following:

1. One (1) projecting sign attached to principal structure that: a) shall not project more than three (3) feet horizontally from the face of the building; b) shall not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights; and c) is no greater than 20 sf in surface area per side (including sign structure), or

2. One (1) band sign that consists of a band of lettering across front of the building. The band sign shall not exceed 24 inches in height. Band sign installation: a) the bottom of the band sign shall not be installed more than 20 feet or less than eight (8) feet above the sidewalk; or b) the band sign may be installed within an existing building's sign board area if the sign board is an integral part of the building's façade structure. Band signs may be front-lit with shielded lights that do not create glare or spill-over light onto adjacent properties. Signs and lettering painted directly on the façade are exempted. [CH(9)]

The aggregate area of all signs, excluding primary building signage (the four (4) conditions listed above), attached to the building in any fashion shall not exceed 10% [CH(10)] on each of the tenant space facades and shall not obscure building details such as transoms, sidelights, or architectural features such as columns, arches, porticos, articulation of fenestrations, or exposed structure. Signs and lettering painted directly on the façade are exempted.

Additional secondary individual tenant signage shall not exceed eight (8) sf maximum for each tenant space and shall consist of: a) one (1) canopy sign under canopy/awning; or b) one (1) wall sign at entrance to tenant space.

Permanent lettering (affixed) shall not obscure more than 30% of the surface area. [CH(11)]

The surface area of temporary banner signs shall be no greater than 40 sf and can be displayed for a period not to exceed 60 aggregate days in any 180 day period. [CH(12)]

Freestanding signs (such as menu boards, etc.), excluding primary building signage, shall be no greater than eight (8) sf maximum per side. Only one (1) such sign per business or per 50 ft radius. [CH(13)]

Neon signs are allowed.

Internally lit plastic lettering or signs, flashing or strobing light signs are prohibited.

Inflatable signs are prohibited.

Portable trailer signs are prohibited.

Billboard or off-premise signs are prohibited.

Digital signs are prohibited. [CH(14)]

## TREE PRESERVATION

The purpose of street trees and landscaping screening and buffer areas is to protect health, safety, and the general welfare of the public; enhance property values; and improve the appearance of the community through preservation of natural resources, including trees and native plants, and maintaining the ecological balance of the area.

With proper landscaping it is possible to enhance property values, save on irrigation and energy expenses.

## ROOF LINE / PITCH

There is a wide variety of roof shapes, pitches, and materials.

**BUILDING MATERIALS**

Masonry materials are common for non-residential structures in this area. The intent of the design standards is to allow for use and creativity with new materials for new structures while maintaining the historic character of buildings that were constructed of masonry. The primary concern is to celebrate the traditional use of masonry by not allowing it to disappear visually by hiding it or covering it.

**DESIGN STANDARDS**

Covering original brick or other masonry system details or facing materials on the front façade, with other materials such as wood, metal or simulated wood siding or any other textures finish that conceal the original exterior system details is prohibited.

Existing buildings with other types of exterior skin system shall be maintained and/or repaired or replaced with materials that match in physical composition, size, scale and proportion.