

## DOWNTOWN WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY DESIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT



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A Part of the General Plan – City of Los Angeles  
<http://cityplanning.lacity.org/> (General Plans)

## **Section 1**

### **Introduction**

The Downtown Westchester Community Design Overlay (CDO) provides guidelines and standards for development projects on properties within the CDO boundaries depicted in Figure 1. The area generally covers properties with commercial plan designations along Sepulveda Boulevard between Los Angeles International Airport to the south and 84<sup>th</sup> Place to the north, bounded to the West by Sepulveda Westway and the East by Sepulveda Eastway, La Tijera Boulevard and Kittyhawk Avenue. The intent of the CDO is to provide design guidance and direction to enhance the visual identity, commercial viability, safety, walkability, appearance and enjoyment of Downtown Westchester.

#### **Downtown Westchester Setting**

The Downtown Westchester CDO covers approximately 55 acres of commercial property primarily fronting Sepulveda Boulevard and Manchester Avenue and also including frontage on Sepulveda Westway, Sepulveda Eastway, La Tijera Boulevard, and 87<sup>th</sup> Street. These parcels are zoned R3-1, C2-1 and C2-2D.

The majority of the properties located in the CDO are retail and office in nature with General Commercial Plan Designations and zoning of C2-1 or C2-2D. Sepulveda Boulevard, Manchester Avenue and La Tijera Boulevard are major streets that provide circulation to the Downtown commercial district and also carry significant through-traffic. A limited number of multifamily residential properties that have commercial plan designations are also within the CDO boundary area.

Present zoning allows for commercial and mixed-use development at floor-area-ratios (FAR) ranging from 1.5:1 to 6:1. No height limit is set in the zoning code, although the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) establishes height limits for new structures due to their proximity to Los Angeles International Airport. The majority of current structures are built to an FAR less than that allowed under the zoning code.

The CDO covers approximately one-half mile each of Sepulveda Boulevard, Manchester Avenue and La Tijera Boulevard. While these are walkable distances, the urban form is not currently conducive to pedestrian activity. There is limited landscaping and street trees, and limited differentiation between the sidewalk and heavily traveled streets. Currently, some businesses do not have entrances on the major streets, but rather can only be accessed from parking lots in the rear.

Parcel sizes range from under 6,000 square feet to over 250,000 square feet. While some parcels are small in area, lot depth is generally at least 100 feet. Many buildings are currently developed across several legal lots but could be redeveloped as large or small parcels.

**Figure 1**



## Downtown Westchester CDO

↑  
N Not to Scale

*Prepared by Los Angeles Department of City Planning • Graphic Services Section • June, 2007*

The Downtown area contains a mix of commercial uses, including: restaurants, fast food establishments, larger national retail chain stores, smaller locally-owned retail shops and professional offices. Development along 87<sup>th</sup> Street is characterized by neighborhood scale local-serving stores and services. There is also a considerable presence of medical office and service uses found on ground and upper floors of the entire area's buildings.

Signage along Sepulveda and Manchester tends to be excessive, bulky, bright, and tall. Billboards are found throughout the area and often distract from the visual aesthetic of the commercial buildings and street improvements.

Sepulveda Boulevard is a major arrival and departure thoroughfare for travel through Los Angeles International Airport. While there are requisite parking and other services along Sepulveda Boulevard, the overall business district does not currently reflect and capitalize upon its gateway location.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The purpose of the Downtown CDO is to ensure that development within the Downtown Westchester area reflects the overall vision of a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly and vibrant commercial district. Downtown Westchester has the potential to serve the shopping needs of Westchester residents and employees, LAX and hotel employees, and visitors driving through on their way to LAX and other destinations. Despite their size, Sepulveda Boulevard and Manchester Avenue can become more inviting and walkable streets by providing pedestrian and safety amenities. La Tijera and 87<sup>th</sup> have strong potential because their smaller size is conducive to walking. The purpose of the CDO is to create an urban environment where surrounding residents can feel safe and enjoy walking to the adjacent Downtown commercial district. Additionally, the CDO is designed to reduce trips within the commercial district and increase pedestrian activity. While one may still drive to Downtown Westchester to shop or dine, improved design and pedestrian amenities will encourage walking from shop to shop, rather than driving the very short distance from one end of the Downtown to the other.

The CDO serves to implement the Urban Design provisions of the Westchester-Playa del Rey Community Plan. The Urban Design chapter of the Community Plan explains that for commercial areas, "the emphasis is on the provision and maintenance of the visual continuity of streetscapes and the creation of an environment that encourages pedestrian and economic activity." These design standards not only provide for visual continuity of commercial areas, but provide standards that are also applicable to any future mixed-use development in the Downtown Westchester area. The Community Plan specifically notes that north of Manchester Avenue is appropriate for mixed-use development.

Properties in the CDO area, particularly along Sepulveda and Manchester, may be well suited for mixed-use development. This development may take the form of ground floor retail businesses with residential or office uses on upper stories. Infill and

redevelopment of the CDO area also presents an opportunity to confine parking to subterranean and limited surface level parking garages, freeing up areas currently used as surface level parking for other uses, such as new development or open-space.

The design standards set forth in the CDO are written to be flexible enough to allow and encourage development and redevelopment of the parcels within Downtown Westchester, and strict enough to assure a safe pedestrian environment and quality design for the entire community.

## **Design Principles**

The Downtown Westchester CDO is based upon the following principles:

- 1.) **Compatibility.** The Downtown Westchester area features a mixture of development types, including: traditional commercial buildings; office buildings; restaurant and auto-oriented uses such as parking structures; car rental lots; and auto repair facilities. The design of such structures is influenced by use, development requirements, lot size, access, and unique site constraints. Within the context of these limitations, new development should maintain a basic consistency and compatibility within and between development projects, which can be achieved through consideration of setbacks, façade articulation, landscaping, and sign programs.
- 2.) **Context.** Design Guidelines and Standards provide regulatory flexibility to allow project applicants to take cues from the environment, historical precedent, physical site data, as well as the goals, desires, and needs of the Westchester Community. Successful developments consider the context in which they are located and therefore help reinforce a positive identity for the Downtown district. Discretionary review will continue to allow for creative architectural features and landscaping that are reflective of Westchester while providing standards for consistent and quality design.
- 3.) **Activity:** Good building and site design are integral to a thriving and active pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district. By facilitating an active street interface in new and existing buildings, design guidelines play an essential role in encouraging pedestrian activity, invigorating commercial uses and creating a safe environment. Use is also an important component in creating pedestrian activity. The guidelines and standards prohibit ground-floor uses that are inappropriate for creating pedestrian activity.
- 4.) **Interest:** Architectural and landscape detailing that can be appreciated at pedestrian levels can help improve the appeal and identity of the Downtown area. This detailing includes storefront ornamentation, reduction of blank surfaces, and the variation of scale, color and materials. Guidelines and standards based upon this principle address architectural theme, surfaces, windows, awnings, signage, architectural treatments, and building setbacks.
- 5.) **Quality:** As new development occurs within the district, it should contribute in a positive manner to the overall visual identity of the Downtown area. The attractiveness of Downtown can be enhanced by the quality of building materials,

attention to design details, limitations on signs and increased landscaping and maintenance. New development and renovation should also consider the full range of measures and sustainable building products and landscaping that will minimize the impact on the natural environment and conserve resources needed for construction and use.

### **Relevance to other Plans**

The Framework Element of the General Plan depicts the Downtown Westchester area as a Community Center. Community Centers are described as “a focal point for surrounding residential neighborhoods and containing a diversity of uses,” that serve residents and visitors to the area. The framework encourages pedestrian activity, quality design, streetscape improvements and day and night uses within Community Centers.

The Westchester-Playa del Rey Community Plan contains an urban design chapter that explicitly mentions the development of a Downtown Westchester CDO. This section of the Community Plan sets minimum standards for design throughout Westchester including locating surface parking behind commercial buildings, providing landscape buffers, maximizing street and pedestrian activity, screening trash and rooftop equipment, and use of transparent windows. The Community Plan also provides specific design criteria for Downtown Westchester, including: streetscape improvements; signage controls; pedestrian friendly development fronting major streets; limiting new driveways and curbcuts; and cohesive appearance of parking structures as part of a parking and access plan. These plans combined with further public input and processes have informed the design standards contained within this CDO.

### **Related Efforts**

A new Business Improvement District (BID) was established in January of 2007 for the Downtown Westchester area. The boundaries of the BID are similar to the CDO except that the CDO includes additional properties along Manchester north of the BID boundaries and east of Truxton Avenue beyond the BID boundary. The primary functions of the BID are providing security, landscape maintenance, sanitation and beautification, marketing and promotions, and new business attraction for the commercial district. The CDO is designed to complement the efforts of the BID by providing urban design that is conducive to pedestrian activity and thus increased retail and business activity.

In April of 2007 the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association released its Sepulveda Boulevard Master Plan. The plan is the result of a joint public-private effort from the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association, a nonprofit organization, in consultation with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation and Council District 11. Work began to implement the Streetscape Improvement plan and widen Sepulveda Boulevard in July 2007. The CDO is designed to advance the goals of the Sepulveda Boulevard Master Plan by requiring quality urban design, street level pedestrian activity, and increased landscaping and street tree planting.

## **Section 2**

### **Administrative Procedures**

#### **Project Thresholds**

General regulations pertaining to the function and administration of Community Design Overlay Zones citywide are addressed in Section 13.08 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). Section 13.08 C.2 of the LAMC defines a project within a CDO boundary. Consistent with that Section, the following project definition and exemptions apply to the Downtown Westchester Community Design Overlay District specifically:

**Downtown Westchester CDO Project** – The erection, construction, addition to, or exterior alterations to, any building or structure within the boundary area of Downtown Westchester CDO, including all signs, canopies/awnings, façade alterations, the addition of roof equipment, and landscaping.

**Exemptions** – A project does not include the following: (a) construction that consists solely of interior remodeling, interior rehabilitation or repair work; (b) alterations of, including structural repairs, or additions to any existing building or structure façade that does not front a public street, and in which the aggregate value of the work, in any one 24-month period, is less than 50 percent of the building or structure's replacement value before the alterations or additions, as determined by the Department of Building and Safety. **(The Exemption does not apply if the alterations or additions are to any exterior wall fronting a public street.)**

The CDO is applicable to all projects located within the Downtown Westchester CDO boundary area—regardless of the proposed or existing use (residential, commercial, industrial).

All Projects within the Downtown Westchester CDO boundary area shall comply with the design guidelines and standards of this CDO.

#### **Project Applications**

All Downtown Westchester CDO projects not eligible for a Director's Sign-off require the submittal of an application, referred to as a "Design Overlay Plan," which includes plans and materials as defined in Section 13.08 C 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. The Director of Planning may require additional documents or materials as deemed necessary. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, projects will be reviewed by the Director of Planning for compliance with these design guidelines and standards.



**Procedures for Director’s Sign-off and Permit Clearances** – Pursuant to Section 13.08 E 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code the following projects may be approved with only a Planning Department sign-off if they comply with all the provisions of the CDO: Signs, Awnings and Canopies, Landscaping totaling less than 20 square feet of ground area, and the addition of roof equipment.

### **Landscaping Quality Assurance**

Prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy, a Landscape Architect (or professional responsible for landscape design) shall submit a letter certifying that the landscaping can be maintained as designed. This letter shall be submitted to the Department of City Planning and maintained in the project case file.

### **Enforcement**

The Department of Building and Safety is responsible for enforcing the provisions included in this document, as well as the associated zone change ordinance, pursuant to Section 91.6202 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

## **Section 3 Definitions**

The following words and phrases, whenever used in this document, shall be construed as defined in this Section. Words and phrases not defined herein shall be construed as defined in Sections 12.03, 13.07 C, and 13.09 B (3) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Articulation:** Clear and distinct separation between design elements or sections of a building façade, including variation in detail, color and materials and modulation of wall planes.

**Baffle:** An artificial obstruction for deflecting the flow of sound or light.

**Forecourt:** A courtyard in front of the entrance to a building or group of buildings.

**Mixed Use Project:** A development combining one or more commercial uses and multiple dwelling units.

**Pedestrian Walkway:** Walkway providing pedestrian passage through structures, landscaping, or parking lots, that is distinguished by ground surface treatments that provide for pedestrian safety and ease of movement.

**Pedestrian Orientation:** Neighborhood design at a human scale. An urban development pattern where buildings and landscaping are proportioned and located so that walking is safe, comfortable, inviting.

**Premise:** A building or portion thereof used as a location for a single business.

**Streetwall (or street edge):** The vertical face of one or more buildings adjacent and fronting the sidewalk. The cumulative façade effect created on a pedestrian oriented corridor when structures are built to the front lot-line and built to the edge of each side lot-line.

**Signs are defined in Section 91.6201 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.**

Herein this text, “the CDO” shall refer to all real property within the boundaries of the CDO.

## Section 4 Design Guidelines and Standards

Unless otherwise noted, guidelines apply to all projects in the Downtown Westchester CDO boundary area.

### SITE PLANNING

#### 1. Setbacks

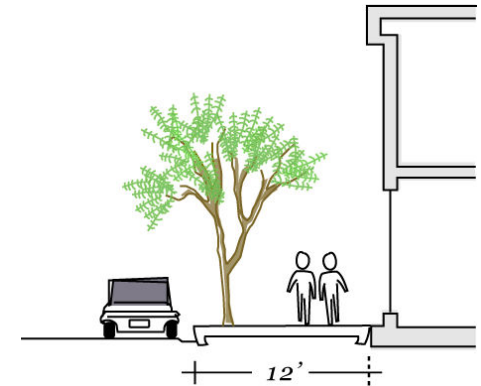
##### Guideline 1:

*Encourage an inviting pedestrian environment and provide for streetwall continuity by locating buildings so they front the main commercial street, and encourage active public uses, such as additional street trees, outdoor seating, kiosks, forecourts and arcades.*

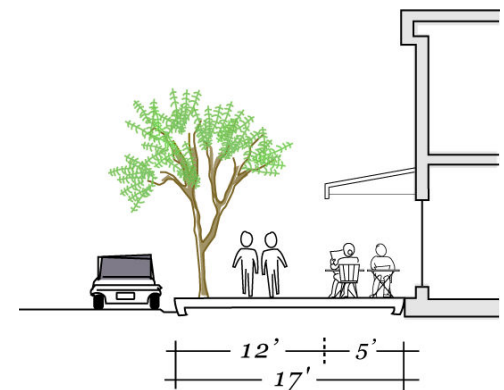
**Standard 1a:** For all projects with ground-floor commercial uses, the ground-level exterior streetwall shall be located not more than 2 feet from any property line abutting the front yard.

**Exception:** The ground-level exterior streetwall may be set back a maximum of 5 feet from the property line, to allow room for additional street trees, outdoor dining, seating, forecourts, arcades, bus waiting areas or other active public uses.

**Standard 1b:** Buildings shall form common and semi-continuous building walls along Sepulveda Boulevard and Manchester Avenue.



**Standard 1 Example.** This illustration shows a typical street section where new construction is located at the property line, which is represented by the dotted line.



**Standard 1 Exception.** A five-foot setback can be provided to allow room for active public uses – here, outdoor seating. The dotted line represents the property line

## 2. Parking and Access

### Guideline 2:

*Improve streetwall continuity and encourage a safe and inviting pedestrian environment by locating parking away from the streetwall and minimizing direct driveway access from major streets. Design parking facilities that do not depreciate the visual quality of the downtown.*

**Standard 2a:** Parking for all new buildings should be located underground, when possible.

**Standard 2b:** Surface parking lots shall not be located between the front property line and the primary building/storefront but rather to the rear of all structures, provided there is vehicular access from side streets or alleys to the rear of the lot. Drive-through establishments are prohibited.

**Standard 2c:** Free-standing parking structures (meaning those structures that contain only parking and no retail, housing, or other non-parking uses) shall be located to the rear of lots, not directly abutting Sepulveda Boulevard or Manchester Avenue. Such parking structures shall be visually compatible with other structures associated with the project, in terms of material, color, and design.

**Standard 2d:** Rear parking structures, structures with retail on the ground floor or other pooled parking alternatives shall be included, where feasible, to promote fewer surface parking lots and greater buildable area for retail space.

**Standard 2e:** New driveways or curbcuts along Sepulveda Boulevard and Manchester Avenue are prohibited. Sepulveda Boulevard and Manchester Avenue shall be maintained and improved to promote pedestrian activity and walkability.

**Standard 2f:** Adequate lighting shall be provided along all pedestrian walkways and vehicular access ways. Lighting shall be designed to prevent spill-over and glare.

**Standard 2g:** No new project, change-of-use or building modification shall result in the reconfiguration, separation, division, walling, fencing or otherwise impede existing shared parking facilities and lots.



**Standard 2b Example.** In this building above, parking is located to the rear, accessed from a side street; the street-fronting façade can then be devoted to more pedestrian-oriented uses (shown below).



## ARCHITECTURAL DETAILING AND ARTICULATION

### 3. Ground-floor façade articulation

#### Guideline 3:

*Heighten visual interest and enhance pedestrian orientation by incorporating three-dimensional elements and material variation into the ground-floor façade of buildings. These elements and variations include: changes in building materials, texture and color; generously sized transparent display windows; arcades, canopies, and awnings; cornices; other details such as transom windows and overdoors.*



**Guideline 3 Example.** Storefronts should provide visual interest through transparency and three-dimensional variations in the façade.

**Standard 3a:** For commercial buildings, at least 60 percent of the building façade at ground level shall consist of doors and windows. Windows and doors should allow views into building interiors and/or to merchandise displays; transparent, non-reflective glass shall be used. A minimum of 70 percent of window bases on a premise shall be set three feet or lower from the ground on building façade.

**Standard 3b:** For all buildings, one or more of the following vertical elements: columns, pilasters, indentations, storefront bays, material treatment, landscaping, shall be employed for every twenty-five horizontal feet of building façade.

These elements shall be in addition to any required variations on upper floors, Standard 4a, below. These elements should be substantially visible, as viewed from across the street. When the design element creates a deviation from the wall plane, such as by indentation, the depth



**Standard 3a Example.** Buildings occupying corner lots can create a welcoming pedestrian environment by articulating the ground-floor facades along both Sepulveda and the intersecting street.



**Standard 3b Example.** These storefronts and restaurants are differentiated from the residential uses above.



difference from the wall face should be measured between six inches and two feet. Variations consisting of a change in building materials should involve a minimum depth or projection from the wall plane of one and one-half inches.

#### 4. Massing and articulation of upper stories

##### Guideline 4:

*Provide visual interest and enhance the public realm by employing rhythmic, three-dimensional variations in massing and building form, including the use of recessed windows, towers, columns, cornices, and changes in the wall plane. Minimize building mass impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods by allowing for ventilation, light, and privacy.*

**Standard 4a:** For every 40 horizontal feet of façade abutting the street, multistory projects shall provide at least one three-dimensional variation per story above the first, in the overall building form. The variations can be combined to extend along several stories. Thus, for example, a four-story project might provide a one-foot projection from the wall plane that extends across two stories and also provide a recessed balcony on the fourth story.

These variations shall be in addition to any required variations along the ground-level façade, as part of Guideline 3, above. When the variations consist of a deviation from the wall plane, by either indentation or projection, the difference from the wall face should measure between six inches and two feet, with the exception of balconies. Variations consisting of a change in building materials should involve a minimum depth or projection from the wall plane of one and one-half inches. These variations should be substantially visible, as viewed from across the street.

**Note:** Projections into the public right-of-way, extending beyond private property, must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.



**Guideline 4 Examples.** Multi-story buildings shall employ subtle three-dimensional variations in massing to allow a break in the building envelope and provide visual interest.



## 5. Mixed-Use Residential and Commercial Structures

### Guideline 5:

*Allow for a variety of building types that include residential uses, while protecting the important function of the commercial center to meet the needs of the community with service, retail, and eating establishments. Continue to promote a vital, active street by integrating multiple land uses and minimizing the potential for extended lengths of streetfront to discontinue commercial uses.*

**Standard 5a:** Ground floor residential uses are prohibited. Residential uses may be located on upper floors and accessed through an entrance and lobby on the ground floor. Residential entrances and lobby areas shall account for no greater than 50% of any ground floor with the balance dedicated to commercial activity.

**Standard 5b:** Residential floors shall be visually differentiated from the ground floor through changes in material, color, plane or setback.

**Standard 5c:** Residential floors facing Sepulveda Boulevard or Manchester Avenue shall be setback a minimum of five (5) feet from the ground floor frontage below.

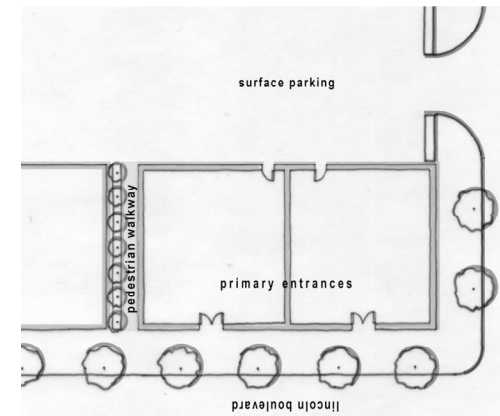
## 6. Mixed-Use Development along Sepulveda Boulevard

### Guideline 6:

*Allow for more intense development along Sepulveda Boulevard within Height District 2 while maintaining a human scale and commercially-anchored mixed-use environment.*

**Standard 6a:** For any project located adjacent to an R2, R1 or more restrictive zone, the portion of the building that is within 60 feet of an R2, R1 or more restrictive zone shall be limited to 50 feet in height.

**Standard 6b:** For any project more than 150 feet in width, the floors above the ground floor shall be broken into at least two separate masses that visually read as separate buildings.



**Guideline 6 Example.** Buildings whose primary entrances front the street help to facilitate pedestrian activity and enliven the sidewalk. In this site plan, a landscaped pedestrian walkway directs those parking in the rear to the primary entrances along the sidewalk

## 7. Entrances

### Guideline 7:

*Emphasize pedestrian orientation and accessibility by creating well-articulated and inviting building entrances, and by orienting these entrances towards the primary street.*

**Standard 7a:** All buildings shall have a ground floor whose primary entrance is oriented towards the main commercial street. This may include entrances accessed through courtyards, arcades, or forecourts abutting the main commercial street.

**Standard 7b:** Secondary entrances may be provided on the intersecting street and to the rear in addition to entrances provided along the main commercial street. The intersecting street entrance shall be permitted not more than 40 feet from the lot line abutting the street if the lot is adjacent or abutting a residential zone.

**Standard 7c:** Building entrances should be recessed and defined by distinct architectural treatments, including: variation in materials, lighting, awnings, textured paving, attractive signage, and planters. Refer to Sections 12 and 13 for planters and landscaping and Sections 14 through 20 for Signage.

**Standard 7d:** Projects on corner lots should have an entrance located at the corner.

## 8. Parking Structure Design

### Guideline :

*Provide parking opportunities that are simultaneously convenient and enhance and protect the visual integrity of the boulevard. Architecturally integrate parking structures into the design of the projects that they serve, and activate the street by including commercial uses on the ground level of structures. Protect nearby residents from the potential adverse impacts – noise, visual, or otherwise – from parking structures and their use.*

**Standard 8a:** The ground floor of new parking structures shall consist of commercial space fronting Sepulveda, measuring a depth of at least 15 feet from the building façade. Freestanding parking structures (void of commercial space) directly abutting Sepulveda, are not an appropriate use.



**Standard 7c Example.** This particular building entrance employs variations in depth, provides inviting window displays, and uses colorful paving materials to add visual interest to attract passers-by.



**Standard 8a Example.** This parking structure is located along the property line and provides retail space along its ground floor. The result is a functional building that ensures an active and inviting pedestrian experience.

**Standard 8b:** Floors of parking shall be visually integrated into the design of buildings, as reflected in the building façade. Landscaping shall be used to further integrate and screen parking garages.

**Standard 8c:** Automobiles on parking levels above the ground floor shall be screened from public view.

**Standard 8d:** Parking structures that abut or are adjacent to any residential zone, shall:

- i. Contain solid decorative walls to block light, fumes, and deflect noise along sides closest to residential use.
- ii. Contain solid spandrel panels a minimum of 3-feet-6 inches in height installed at the ramps of the structure to minimize headlight glare.
- iii. Construct garage floors and ramps using textured surfaces to minimize tire squeal
- iv. Not contain exhaust vents along sides closest to residential use.

## 9. Awnings and canopies

### Guideline 9:

*Where appropriate, use awnings or canopies to define the public realm of the sidewalk, provide shelter and shade, and enhance the building façade by adding variation, color, and horizontal rhythm. Awnings and canopies reinforce a pedestrian scale and add a comfortable sense of enclosure to outdoor seating and other active public uses.*

**Standard 9a:** Size and placement of awnings and canopies should enhance the building's overall frame, detailing, and rhythm. Placement should correspond to the location of a storefront or entrance.

**Standard 9b:** For awnings located above windows, awning shapes shall be consistent with window frames.

**Standard 9c:** Awnings and canopies shall be constructed of high quality, durable, fade-resistant, and fire-retardant materials.



**Standard 9a Examples.** Awnings can enhance the public realm by providing a comfortable sense of enclosure for pedestrians. Additionally they can improve a building façade by adding depth and three-dimensional variation.





**Note:** Projections into the public right-of-way, extending beyond private property, must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

## APPURTENANCES

### 10. Security grilles

#### Guideline 10:

*Provide storefront security as needed without obscuring storefront windows and detracting from the pedestrian environment along the sidewalk. Minimize the presence of security grilles and bars as visible from Sepulveda and Manchester.*

**Standard 10a:** External security grilles shall not be affixed to any facade abutting Sepulveda, Manchester or other public street, excluding rear alleys.

**Standard 10b:** Premises should employ non-barrier (alarm or sensor) theft-deterrent systems where possible. If such security systems are not feasible, interior security grilles or vandal-proof glazing that is resistant to impact should be used on any storefronts abutting any public street.

### 11. Utility and Service areas / Mechanical Equipment

#### Guideline 11:

*Improve the pedestrian environment along the sidewalk and minimize visual blight by screening unsightly equipment and locating it away from public streets and other public rights-of-way, including pedestrian walkways and parking areas.*

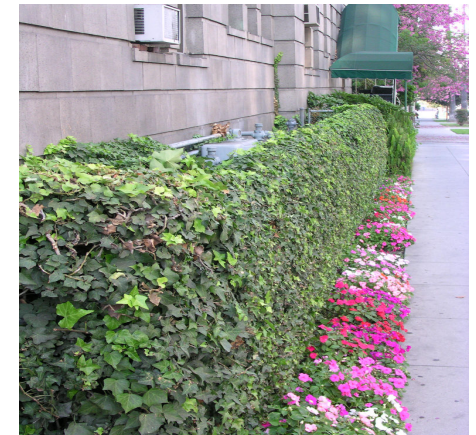
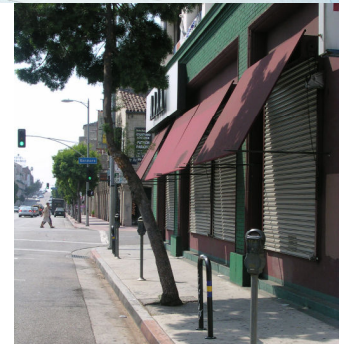
**Standard 11a:** Utilities, storage areas, trash containers, air conditioning units, fire alarms, and similar equipment shall be placed to the rear of the site or underground when feasible. Otherwise, structures housing such elements shall be screened with landscaping or designed in a way as to be as inconspicuous as possible.

**Standard 11b:** Trash storage bins shall be located within a gated, covered enclosure and screened with landscaping, so as not to be viewed from the public right-of-way.



#### Standard 10a Inappropriate Examples.

Avoid security grilles that are unsightly or that conceal storefront windows when closed.



**Standard 11a Example.** Structures housing mechanical equipment adjacent to the public right-of-way should be screened with landscaping or designed in a way that is as inconspicuous as possible.

**Standard 11c:** Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened with materials that are architecturally integrated to the building.

## 12. Fencing and Walls

### Guideline 12:

*Support an open and accessible physical environment by minimizing visual barriers and the enclosure of outside space. Locate and design any necessary fencing in a manner so as not to detract from the quality of the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk adjacent to Sepulveda or Manchester.*

**Standard 12a:** Fences and walls should not front public streets, unless required by the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Standard 12b:** No fence or wall abutting a public street shall be taller than 42 inches.

**Standard 12c:** Chain-link fences and barbed wire are prohibited.

**Standard 12d:** Wall materials and design should be decorative and coordinate with the structures on the site.

**Standard 12e:** The planting of climbing plants is encouraged along the width of fencing and walls.

**Standard 12f:** Enclosures for sidewalk dining must utilize open fencework or planter boxes. The materials and design of fencing or planters should coordinate with the structures on the site.

## LANDSCAPING AND HARDSCAPE

### 13. General Landscaping—Location and Materials

#### Guideline 13:

*Create inviting spaces, provide shade within the public realm, screen unattractive areas, and enhance architectural detailing through the thoughtful and careful placement of landscaping. Pedestrian plazas, green space, pocket parks and open space shall be encouraged.*



**Guideline 12 Inappropriate Example.** Overheight, wrought-iron fencing overdefines the division between public and private realms and creates a harsh, forbidding outdoor environment.



**Guideline 13 Example.** Evenly spaced canopy trees planted in the parkway area add a comfortable level of shade and definition to the public realm.

**Note:** Landscaping may include plant materials such as trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials, annuals, as well as rocks, water features, sculpture, art, or paving materials.

**Standard 13a:** All areas of a site not occupied by buildings, driveways, or used for outdoor dining or other pedestrian uses shall be landscaped; 80% of landscaped areas shall consist of plant materials.

**Standard 13b:** Landscaping, such as planter boxes, is encouraged between the public street and the sidewalk. This landscaping serves as a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

**Standard 13c:** Low-water (drought-tolerant, and including native) plants should be used.

**Standard 13d:** An automatic irrigation system should be installed within landscaped areas of more than 10 square feet. A drip irrigation system is recommended.

**Standard 13e:** For new building projects and those involving alteration to greater than 50% of the exterior walls, trees with appropriate tree grates shall be planted in the adjacent public right-of-way, including Sepulveda, at a ratio of 1 tree for every 25 feet of lot length, to the satisfaction of the Urban Forestry Division, Bureau of Street Services, Department of Public Works or to the California Department of Transportation. Tree grates shall be of a uniform color with a bright decorative design used on Sepulveda Boulevard. Trees along Sepulveda Boulevard shall alternate between palm and canopy species.

**Note:** Landscaping in public right-of-way, extending beyond private property, must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

**Standard 13f:** Trees shall be planted along rear lot lines adjacent to residential parcels at a ratio of one tree for every 25 feet of lot width. At a minimum, these trees shall be 24-inch box size with a trunk diameter of 2 inches and a height of 10 feet at the time of planting.

**Standard 13g:** Landscape strips shall separate any driveways from walkways which are used to access the rear of properties.

**Standard 13h** Proposals for new buildings and remodels involving more than 50% of the exterior walls shall include a streetscape and pedestrian plan covering walkability and public art aspects of the project.

**Native plant:** Defined according to LAMC Section 12.40 D as “[a]ny (plant) species indigenous to the Los Angeles area existing before European settlement, as identified in James Hendrickson’s *The Jepson Manual*, or its successor standard reference, as adopted by the Director of Planning.”

**Low-water:** Defined according to Guidelines AA, Table II, Option 6 in the City of Los Angeles Landscape Ordinance (Ordinance #170,978): “Plants . . . that will, in the designed location, and properly established for three years, remain in good health with no more than monthly watering in summer.”



**Standard 13c Example.** Thousands of varieties of drought-tolerant and low-water plant species exist that are simultaneously hardy, low-maintenance, and eye-catching, such as this Coral Aloe shown above.



**Standard 13i:** New buildings shall reconstruct public and private sidewalks with any of the following (a) decorative or patterned, (b) decorative pavers, (c) decorative plaques, particularly Flight Path plaques along Sepulveda Boulevard. This will require approval from Public Works.

#### 14. Landscaping Parking Lots and Structures

**Guideline 14:**

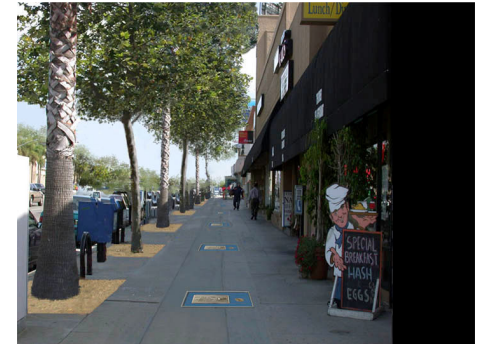
*Enhance parking areas by providing landscaping that shades, buffers, and conceals unattractive views of parking.*

**Note:** Standards apply to areas that include six or more parking stalls and shall be in addition to, and consistent with, the requirements set forth in Sections 12.21. A.6(g), A.6(h), and 12.21. A.6(i) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Standard 14a:** A five-foot landscaped buffer shall be located between parking areas and the property line wherever a surface parking lot abuts the public right-of-way or an R zone property. The landscaped buffer area should contain 24-inch box trees planted at ratio of one for every 10 linear feet. At a minimum, these trees should measure a trunk diameter of 2 inches and a height of 10 feet at the time of planting.

**Standard 14b:** A minimum of 7% of the total area of surface parking shall be landscaped, including one tree for every 4 parking spaces evenly dispersed throughout the lot. Tree species should be a variety with a large canopy.

**Standard 14c:** Surface parking lots located adjacent to any R1 zone shall provide a solid decorative masonry wall and landscape buffer between the parking lot and the R1 zone.



**Standard 13e and 13i Example.** Street Trees shall be planted with appropriate sidewalk street grates and the sidewalk shall include decorative plaques along Sepulveda Boulevard.



**Standard 14a Example.** A five-foot landscaped buffer between the parking lot and the public right-of-way screens the lot from view while providing shade for passers-by.

## SIGNAGE

### 15. General –All Signs

#### Guideline 15:

*Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the Boulevard, through context-sensitive signs. Ensure that signage design is suitable in terms of location, layout, and styling. Minimize sign clutter and emphasize pedestrian-scale design.*

**Standard 15a:** Signs shall complement buildings with respect to style, design, materials, and colors. Illuminated signs shall have glare carefully controlled and if internally illuminated, lighting sources concealed.

**Standard 15b:** The exposed backs of all signs visible from a public right-of-way should be suitably finished and maintained.

**Standard 15c:** The following signs are prohibited: billboards (off-site signs), pole signs, roof signs, banners, illuminated architectural canopy signs, flashing, moving or blinking signs and inflatable devices.

**Standard 15d:** None of these provisions shall prohibit a building address from being clearly identified so the parcel can be found by emergency personnel.

**Note:** Sign illumination shall be limited pursuant to Section 91.6205.13 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Note:** Within 90 days of closing a business, any related signs shall be removed and replaced with blank panels or painted out, pursuant to Section 91.6205.9.4 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Note:** Temporary signs shall be permitted pursuant to Section 91.6216 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Note:** Signage extending beyond private property and residing in the public right-of-way must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.



**Guideline 15 Example.** Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the Boulevard through context-sensitive signage.

**Refer to the City of Los Angeles Planning Department Sign Dictionary for additional definitions and images.**

**Wall sign:** Any sign attached to, painted on, or erected against the wall of a building or structure, with the exposed face of the sign in a plan approximately parallel to the plane of the wall.

## 16. Wall Signs

### Guideline 16:

*Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the primary streets, through the appropriate placement of wall signs. Locate signs in a manner so as to not detract from building architecture. Minimize sign clutter and ensure that signage design is suitable and well proportioned to the structure and building façade.*

**Standard 16a:** Each premise or business shall be permitted one wall sign. One additional sign is permitted if the premise abuts another street, alley, or public parking area.

**Standard 16b:** Wall sign size shall not exceed 1.5 square feet per 1 foot of building façade length. In no case shall all signage at a site exceed 75 square feet. Signs facing alleys or parking areas shall not exceed 5 square feet total. Illuminated signs shall not exceed 1 square feet per 1 foot of building façade length and if facing an alley or parking area shall not exceed 10 square feet total.

**Standard 16c:** Composition height of wall signs shall not exceed 2 feet and letters shall not exceed 1.5 feet in height. Composition height of wall signs for businesses located on corner lots of major intersections (Manchester and Sepulveda, Manchester and La Tijera, Sepulveda and 88<sup>th</sup>, Sepulveda and Lincoln) shall not exceed 3 feet and letters shall not exceed 2.5 feet in height.

**Standard 16d:** Sign width should not exceed 90% of the width of a storefront, and 70% of the width of the building.

**Standard 16e:** Signs should be located at the primary entrance to a building.

**Standard 16f:** Signs shall not dominate or obscure the architectural elements of building facades.

**Standard 16g:** The height and width of letters and logos shall be properly proportioned to the building and fit well within area the sign is located.

**Standard 16h:** Wall signs should not project more than 10 inches from the face of a wall.

**Standard 16i:** Signs facing alleys or any residential use or zone shall not be illuminated.



**Guideline 16 Example.** This wall sign employs both whimsy and simplicity to identify the establishment and to add visual interest to the storefront.



**Standard 16h Example.** This wall sign projects from the wall plane, enough to provide some added definition without becoming garish.

**Standard 16j:** Premises located above the ground floor, which do not take their primary access directly from an exterior walkway open to the public, may have only a building or business identification sign adjacent to each exterior entrance which provides access to those premises.

**Standard 16k:** The height of the top of any sign shall be limited to a maximum of 20 feet above the elevation of the sidewalk or edge of the public walkway used to enter the premises.

**Standard 16l:** On all signs and properties facing 87th Street, each building shall maintain a consistent signage plan for all its tenants. Existing wood-paneled painted signs shall remain or be replaced with similar wood-paneled painted signs.

## 17. Projecting Signs (a.k.a. Pedestrian, Blade Signs)

### Guideline 17:

*Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the Downtown through the appropriate placement of projecting signs. Minimize sign clutter and ensure that signage design is suitable and well proportioned to the structure and building façade.*

**Standard 17a:** Each business or tenant shall be permitted one projecting sign, limited to 4 square feet. This sign shall be in addition to wall, awning or canopy signs.

**Standard 17b:** Each business that is located above the first floor may have a projecting sign on the ground level if there is direct exterior pedestrian access to the second floor business space.



**Standard 16l Example.** This wall sign is consistent with the wood-paneled painted signs along 87<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Projecting sign:** A sign, other than a wall sign, that is attached to a building and projects outward therefrom with one or more sign faces approximately perpendicular to the face of the building.



**Guideline 17 Example.** Small projecting signs can offer some three-dimensional variation to a streetscape, providing visual interest to pedestrians and helping to identify business locations.



## 18. Awning or Canopy Signs

### Guideline 18:

*Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while providing the benefit of awnings or canopies upon buildings. Minimize sign clutter and ensure that signage design is suitable and well proportioned to the structure, building façade, and awning.*

**Standard 18a:** In lieu of a wall sign, each business or tenant shall be permitted one awning sign, to be located over the building or business entrance. An additional awning sign is permitted if the premise abuts another street, alley, or public parking area.

**Note:** Awnings can be provided in addition to wall signs provided that the awning does not include any storefront identification.

**Standard 18b:** Sign letters should be located on valences only, and letter height should not to exceed 10 inches.

## 19. Other Signs

### Guideline 19:

*Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the Downtown, through the appropriate placement, size, and quantity of additional signage.*

**Standard 19a:** Window Signs shall not to exceed 10 percent of each panel or total window area, and individual signs shall not exceed 4 square feet.

**Standard 19b:** Information Signs shall be permitted two per building, and shall not exceed 4 square feet.

**Standard 19c:** Building Identification Signs shall be permitted one per building, and shall not exceed 4 square feet for one-story buildings. For each story above the first, the size of the sign(s) may increase an additional 2 square feet. An additional Building Identification Sign shall be permitted for buildings located on a corner lot.

**Standard 19d:** One portable menu board sign may be permitted in the public right-of-way for eating establishments, bakeries, florists, and similar businesses that have as their primary sales perishable good, provided that all of the following conditions are met:



**Guideline 18 Example.** Awning signs can add three-dimensional variation to a storefront, provide shade for passers-by, and can enhance the identity of the establishment.



**Guideline 19a Example.** This window sign identifies the business while not obstructing views into the display windows.

**Identification Sign:** A wall sign that is limited to a company logo, generic type of business or the name of a business or building.



- i. The sign is removed at the end of each business day.
- ii. The sign's dimensions do not exceed two feet by three feet.
- iii. The sign does not interfere with pedestrian movement or wheelchair access
- iv. The sign has a weighted base capable of keeping the sign upright in moderate wind.
- v. The sign is not illuminated.
- vi. All required sign permits have been secured from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

**Standard 19e:** Mural Signs are encouraged. The written message shall not exceed three percent of the total area of the sign. Signs must be approved pursuant to Section 91.6216 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

## 20. Multi-tenant Buildings

### Guideline 20:

*Enhance the visual quality of the primary commercial streets by providing signage coordination and consistency on the facades of large buildings.*

**Standard 20a:** Multi-tenant buildings shall submit a sign plan to the Planning Department that designates the style and design of all signs on the building. Sign plans should establish rules of placement and size.

**Standard 20b:** Signs on a multi-tenant building shall be placed at the same uniform elevation to create visual continuity.

**Monument Sign:** A sign that is erected directly upon the existing or artificially created grade that has a horizontal dimension equal to or greater than its vertical dimension.



**Guideline 20 Example.** Monument signs may be used in instances where wall signs are not easily viewed from Manchester or Sepulveda.

## 20. Monument Signs

### Guideline 21:

*Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the primary commercial streets by limiting monument signs to only those circumstances where wall signs are not easily viewed from Manchester or Sepulveda.*

**Standard 21a:** Monument signs shall only be permitted for developments where wall signs and building facades do not front Sepulveda or Manchester, or where tenant spaces are primarily entered through a courtyard, or if sited where parking areas abut Sepulveda. In these circumstances, one monument sign shall be permitted per building, and shall be not more than 25 square feet in size and the top of the sign shall be not more than 8 feet above sidewalk grade.

**Standard 21b:** Retail tenants in multi-tenant buildings shall be permitted a listing on a monument sign. Tenant listings and displays shall be uniform.

## RESOURCE PROTECTION

## 22. Sustainable building design

### Guideline 22:

*Design projects to take advantage of natural systems and features – breezes, daylight, tree canopies – and to minimize the need for artificial lighting, cooling, and heating. Incorporate sustainable building elements into the overall form and aesthetic of projects.*

**Standard 22a:** Projects are encouraged to meet LEED certification requirements.

**Note:** The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is a benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. The LEED green building rating system was developed and is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council.

**Standard 22b:** To minimize heat gain, projects should employ high-performance windows, coupled with awnings or exterior window shelves – particularly along the southeast, south, and southwest building faces.



**Guideline 22 Example.** This project incorporates solar technologies directly into the façade design, and is organized around a site layout that encourages cross-ventilation, natural lighting, and shading from the strongest daytime sun.



**Standard 22b Example.** This exterior awning or sunshade limits internal heat gain from intense daytime sun, thereby minimizing the need for air conditioning.

**Standard 22c:** Projects should include more windows along the north- and northeast-facing walls, while decreasing window area along the west- and southwest-facing walls on upper floors.

**Exception:** Ground level façade transparency shall be consistent regardless of the direction of the streetwall, pursuant to Standard 3a, above.

**Standard 22d:** The placement of windows should balance light considerations with the need to provide adequate ventilation and allow for cross-ventilation. If single-sided ventilation is necessary, consider horizontal pivot windows, which offer the highest ventilation capacity.

**Standard 22e:** Building and construction materials should use recyclable, durable materials when possible, and reclaimed and recycled materials will be encouraged in the future if they become permitted by the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**Standard 22f:** New building roofs shall either be “green roofs,” contain landscaping or gardens, or be constructed or painted a heat reflective material.

## 23. Historic Resources

### Guideline 23:

*Historic structures often include architectural elements and design consistent with the guidelines and standards present in this CDO. The combination of old and new buildings adds an interest and richness to the urban fabric along Sepulveda.*

**Note:** Potential historic resources may be identified as part of the current *Survey LA*, the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project; these should also be treated in accordance with the Standards listed below.

**Standard 23a:** Alterations to, or demolitions of, properties identified as potential historic resources, shall be reviewed first by the City of Los Angeles Planning Department Office of Historic Resources, which shall provide a recommendation to the Director of Planning regarding the proposed project.

Upon staff recommendation, a qualified historic preservation consultant may be required and hired at the expense of the applicant, to determine whether or not the building is eligible for listing at the local/state/national level as a historical resource.

**High Performance Windows:** Windows with climate-specific enhanced thermal technologies using improved framing materials, low-emissivity and solar control coatings, low-conductance gas fills, improved thermal breaks and edge spacers, and better edge sealing techniques.



**Standard 23a Example.** The Loyola Professional Building at 8610 Sepulveda, built as a theatre in 1945 by Clarence Smale, is identified as a potential historic resource.

**Standard 23b:** For buildings identified as historic structures, unpainted masonry shall not be painted on facades fronting Sepulveda or other public street.

**Standard 23c:** For buildings identified as historic structures, original patterns of transom windows shall be maintained, if existing; covering transom windows with paint, signs, awnings, or wood panels is not appropriate.

**Standard 23d:** For buildings identified as historic structures, signage, if applied to the façade directly, shall be affixed in such a manner so as to not damage the façade.

**Standard 23e:** For buildings identified as historic structures, appropriate signage that uniquely identifies and enhances the historic site shall be incorporated.

**Guideline 23 Additional Resource:** The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation provide specific recommendations for retaining original elements and existing historic features. Consider referencing these standards when pursuing remodels of older buildings. When buildings are listed as historic resources, it is these standards to which they are held.