



Objective Design Standards for Infill Development in Historic Districts

Public Workshop 2
June 30, 2026

LOS ANGELES
CITY PLANNING



Architectural
Resources Group



STRATISCOPE

Agenda

- Project Overview
- Project Update
- Draft Objective Design Standards for Infill Housing
- Public Workshop 1 Feedback
- Draft Objective Design Standards for ADUs
- Next Steps
- Q & A

Project Team

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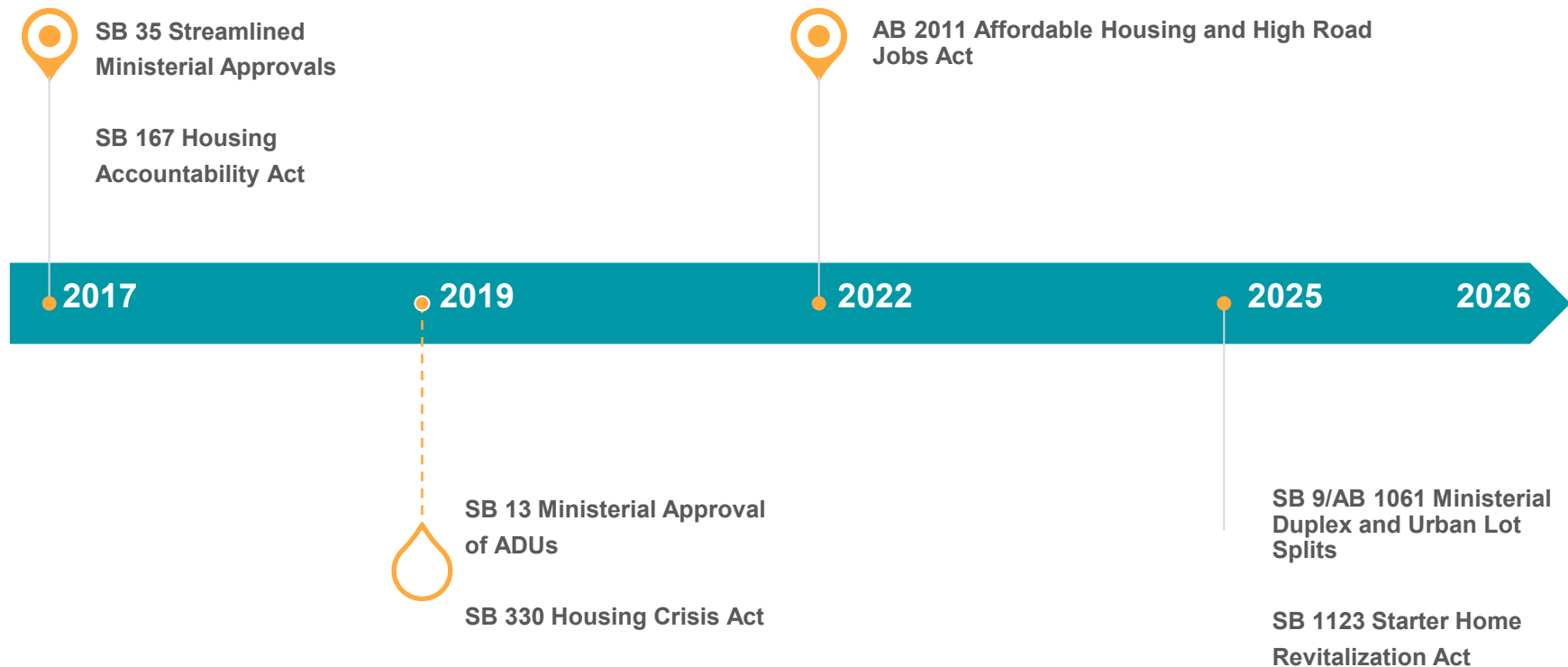
Stratiscope

- John Bwarie



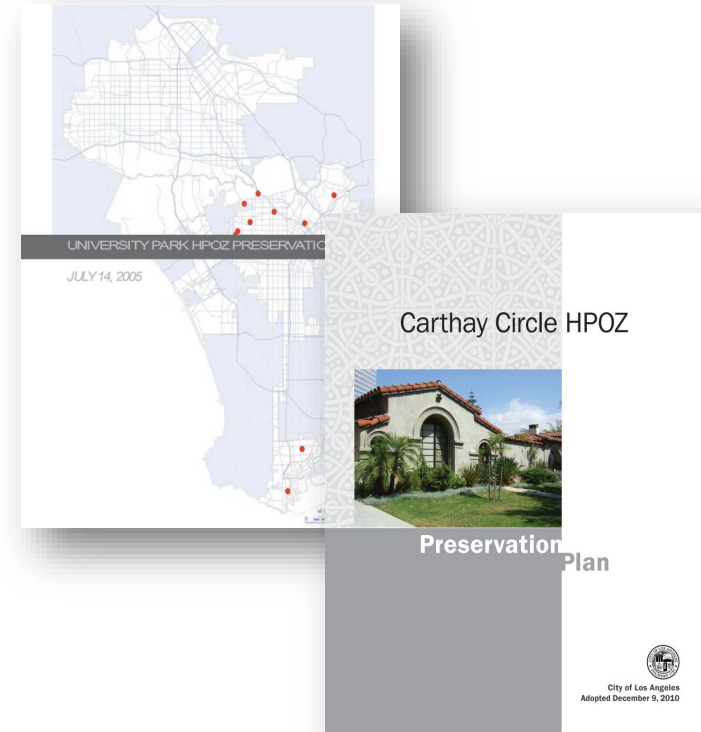
Project Overview

Background: Changes in State Housing Laws



Existing HPOZ Preservation Plans Lack Objective Standards

- HPOZ Preservation Plans were intentionally crafted with flexible language
- Very few design guidelines qualify as “objective” standards
- Design review gap: HPOZs have minimal standards to guide large-scale infill projects
- Opportunity to create clear, predictable process for applicants, while ensuring sensitive and compatible new development



What

The City of Los Angeles is developing and adopting **objective design standards** for infill housing, mixed-use infill, and ADUs in Historic Preservation Overlay Zones

Why

- To be **proactive** in responding to state mandates
- To accommodate new **housing opportunities** in historic districts
- To maintain LA's designation as a Pro-housing city
- To **protect and reinforce** the distinctive characteristics of local historic districts

How

Secured grant funding to:

- **Support** community engagement
- **Develop** objective standards
- **Assist** planning staff through the adoption process

Frequently Asked Questions

- Review rehabilitation projects, per the Ordinance and Plan
- Make recommendations for infill projects as allowed by State housing laws
- Minimize procedural changes to the Board's role

How will this affect the HPOZ Board's role?



- New residential infill (including eligible streamlined affordable housing projects)
- New mixed-use infill
- New ADUs

What type of projects will be eligible?



- Grant scope limited to HPOZs
- Will expand to other historic resources in the future

Why can't the project go beyond HPOZs?



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, showing a dense residential area with many multi-story apartment buildings. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky. The image has a color gradient overlay, transitioning from orange on the left to blue on the right.

Project Update

Project Timeline

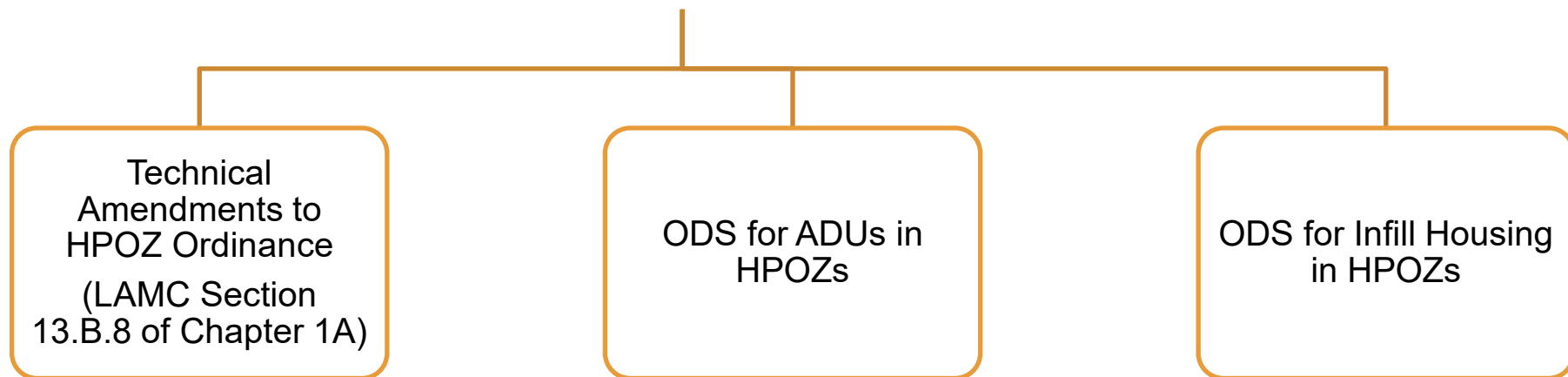
2025



2026



Adoption Components



Community Engagement



Focus Groups



Conference Session



Informational Sessions



Online Survey



Public Workshops



Public Hearing



Objective Design Standard Definition

A “design standard that involves **no personal or subjective judgment** by a public official and is **uniformly verifiable** by reference to an external and **uniform benchmark or criterion** available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official before submittal of an application” (Gov. Code § 66300(a)(7)).

Simply put, objective standards must be **quantifiable, clear, predictable, fixed, and knowable** to all parties involved, in advance. They leave **no room for interpretation**.

Design Guidelines vs. Design Standards

GUIDELINES

Often rely on interpretation, opinion, and subjective distinctions:

Permissive language such as “should,” “may,” and “encourage”

Descriptors such as “compatible,” “appropriate,” and “high quality”

STANDARDS

Quantifiable, (often) measurable, and **universally understandable**

Examples:

- Window dimensions or ratio
- Porch width and depth
- Upper story step-back depth
- Allowed/prohibited building materials

An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely Los Angeles, with a backdrop of forested mountains. The image is overlaid with a gradient: a warm orange glow on the left side and a cool blue tint on the right side. The text 'Draft ODS for Infill Housing' is centered in white, with a short white horizontal line above the 'D' in 'Draft'.

Draft ODS for Infill Housing

ODS for Infill Housing

- General Provisions
- Residential Infill
 1. Setting, Location & Site Design
 2. Massing & Orientation
 3. Roof Forms
 4. Openings
 5. Materials & Details
 6. Bungalow Courts & Courtyard Apts.
 7. Infill on Contributing Properties
- Mixed-Use Residential Infill
 1. Setting, Location & Site Design
 2. Massing & Orientation
 3. Openings & Storefronts
 4. Materials & Details

General Provisions

1. A primary Contributing building shall not be demolished.
2. A primary Contributing building shall not be relocated.
3. New infill projects on Contributing parcels shall be located behind the rear wall of the primary structure.

Applicability

The ODS for HPOZs apply to **eligible residential infill development projects** on Contributing and Non-Contributing parcels, with the **following exceptions**:

- Any work related to **demolishing or relocating existing primary Contributing buildings**.
- Any work related to **altering or adding onto existing primary Contributing buildings** (excluding the addition of an ADU or JADU).

The ODS for HPOZs do not apply to California Register and National Register-listed historic districts.

Non-Compliant Designs

If a project is not consistent with the objective design standards, the project must be revised to comply with the standards.

Alternatively, a project applicant can opt-in to having their residential infill project processed through the review processes outlined in the City's HPOZ Ordinance and the applicable HPOZ Preservation Plan.

Relationship to HPOZ Preservation Plans

The ODS for HPOZs adapt and **build upon** existing, relevant **HPOZ Preservation Plan guidelines** to ensure the streamlined review of new housing units, while preserving the intent of the HPOZ program.

Like the HPOZ Preservation Plan guidelines, the ODS for HPOZs are **grounded in** the principles of **the Secretary of the Interior's Standards** for the Treatment of Historic Properties as related to compatibility and maintaining a community's distinctive historic and architectural features.

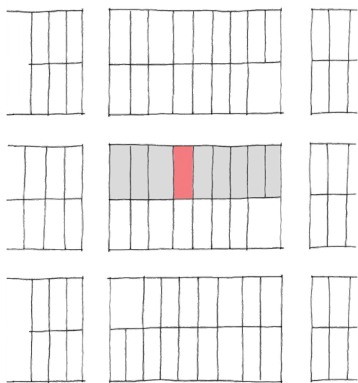
The HPOZ Preservation Plans will continue to be used for all other projects not triggering ODS review, per LAMC Section 13B.8 of Chapter 1A.



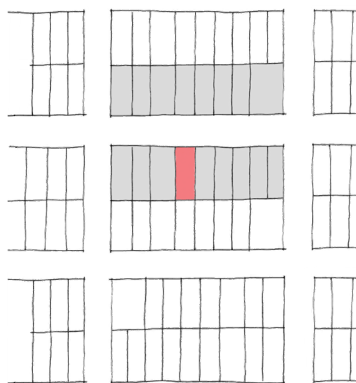
Public Workshop 1 Feedback

Workshop Question 1

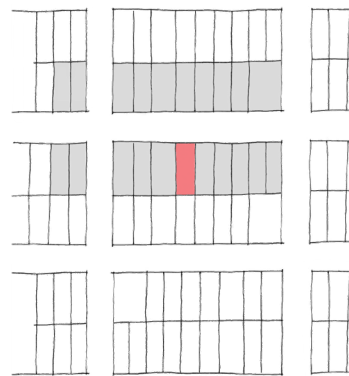
The Objective Design Standards will use nearby properties to establish context (front yard setbacks, roof types, etc.) for a project site. Since not all project sites will have district Contributors immediately adjacent, a wider definition of context is required. **Which of the following options do you think is most appropriate?**



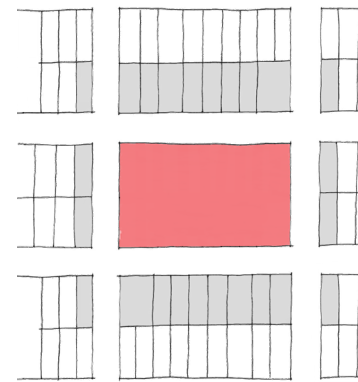
A. Block Face



B. Block Face and Facing Block



C. Context Area – Mid-Block Infill



C. Context Area – Full Block Infill

Question 1 Feedback

Many workshop participants felt the **appropriate context** for design reference is either a larger **defined context area**, or **depends** on the size of the HPOZ, location within the HPOZ, makeup of the rest of the street, etc.

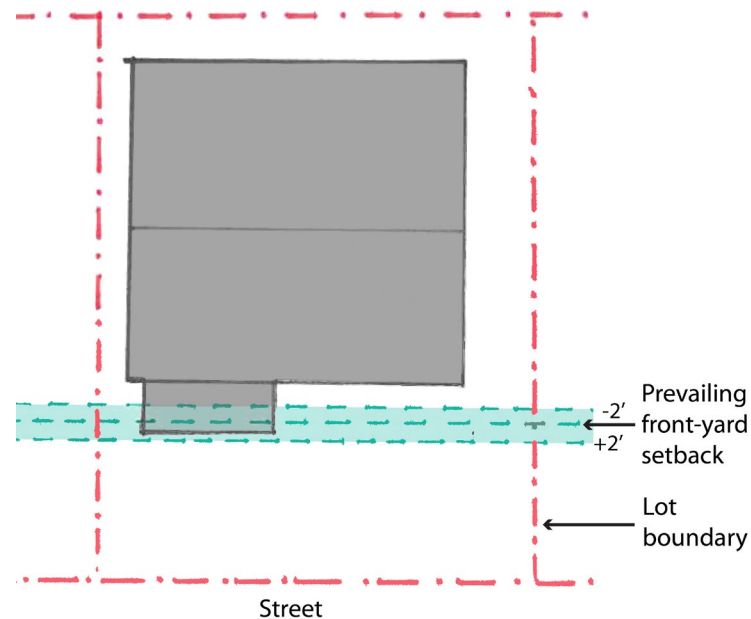
ODS Response – Contextual Design

RESIDENTIAL INFILL: SETTING, LOCATION & SITE DESIGN

Standard

The primary façade of any new residential structure shall match the **prevailing front-yard setback** of Contributing **properties on the same block face**, within ± 2 feet.

If there are no Contributing properties on the same block face, including when the new structure comprises the entire block face, the primary façade setback only needs to meet existing underlying zoning requirements.



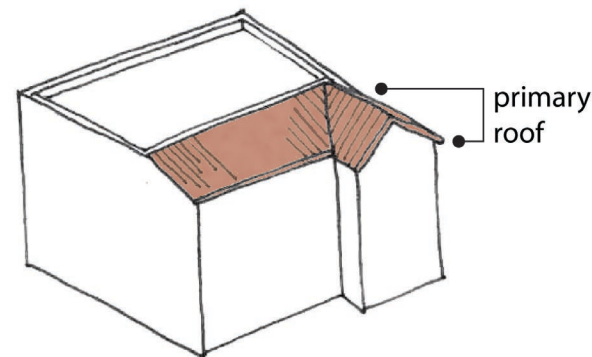
ODS Response – Contextual Design

RESIDENTIAL INFILL: ROOF FORMS

Standard

New residential structures that are 2.5 stories or less shall utilize the **primary roof type and pitch** present on over 50% of Contributing properties on the same block face and facing block.

If no majority roof type or pitch exists on the block face and facing block, the roof type and pitch shall **utilize the roof type and pitch of any single Contributing property** present on the same block face or facing block.



Workshop Question 2

Which approach should be used as a basis for regulating appropriate materials and features when designing new infill in HPOZs?

The following **roof types** are **allowed** on new residential buildings:

- Gable
- Hipped
- Flat or flat with parapet
- Gambrel

A. List-based

Buildings that are **2.5 stories or less** shall utilize one primary roof type and pitch **matching the predominant roof** type and pitch present on **at least 50% of Contributing properties** on the block face. Buildings that are **3 stories or taller** may have a **flat roof** with a parapet or overhang.

B. Context-based

Spanish Colonial Revival style buildings must include a gable roof or a parapet.

C. Style-based

Question 2 Feedback

Participants were **split almost evenly on the ODS approach**: "List-based approach," "Style-based approach," and "Context-based approach".

ODS Response – Approach to Regulating Design

RESIDENTIAL INFILL: SETTING, LOCATION & SITE DESIGN

Standard

Entryways within the bungalow court or courtyard apartment must include at least **one of the following**:

- Porch
- Raise entry (stoop)
- Recessed entry
- Covered flush entry
- Courtyard entry

RESIDENTIAL INFILL: MATERIALS & DETAILS

Standard

If over 75% of Contributing **properties on the same block face and facing block do not have stucco** as the primary wall coating material, the **new residential structure shall not utilize stucco** as the primary wall coating.

Workshop Question 3

When, if ever, do you think contemporary design is appropriate for infill construction in HPOZs?

Question 3 Feedback

The majority of participants felt that **contemporary design may be appropriate if massing was compatible** to nearby properties.

Some felt it would never be appropriate.

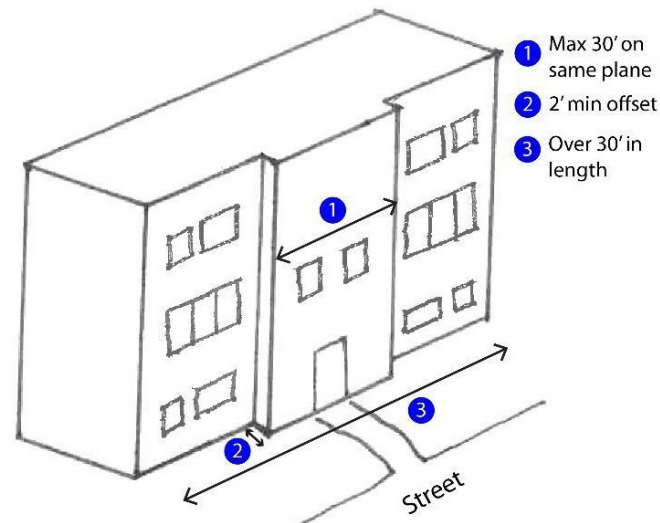
ODS Response – Contemporary Infill

RESIDENTIAL INFILL: MASSING & ORIENTATION

Standard

For street-facing facades over 30 feet in length, **no more than 75% of the façade** shall share the **same continuous plane**.

A **minimum 2-foot offset** is required for any wall plane that exceeds 30 feet in length.



Workshop Question 4

What issues, if any, have you seen related to regrading (changes in topography, site slope) in proposed or built projects in HPOZs?

Question 4 Feedback

While many participants reported no significant regrading issues in HPOZs, **regrading is a concern in hilly areas** (e.g., Angelino Heights) where it can alter the traditional rhythm of the street.

ODS Response – Regrading

RESIDENTIAL INFILL: SETTING, LOCATION & SITE DESIGN

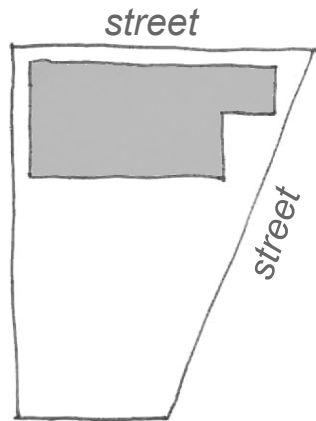
Standard

The existing site grade shall not be altered by more than ± 2 feet, except where required for code compliance and subterranean parking.

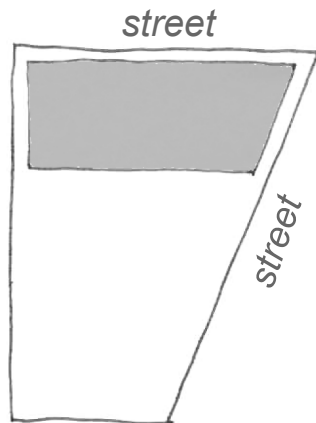
Workshop Question 5

In terms of the footprint and form, should new mixed-use buildings:

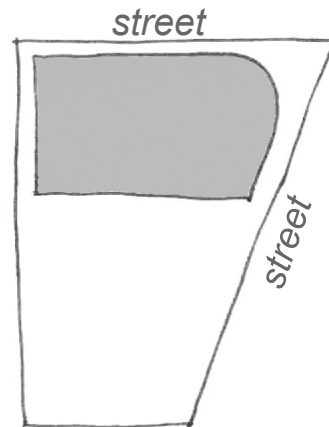
- A. Be required to be rectilinear in form (i.e. all 90-degree angles).
- B. Be allowed to respond to its lot shape and/or corner siting.
- C. Be any shape, regardless of lot shape (including curved footprint).



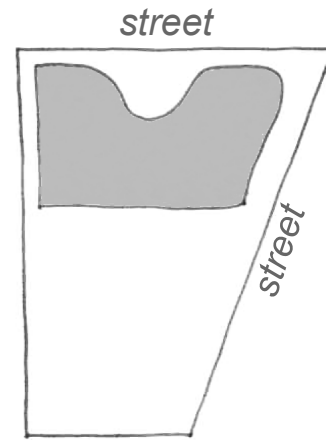
A. Rectilinear in shape



B. Respond to lot shape



C. Any shape



C. Any shape

Question 5 Feedback

The majority of participants preferred that **new mixed-use buildings** "be allowed to **respond to its lot shape and/or corner siting**".

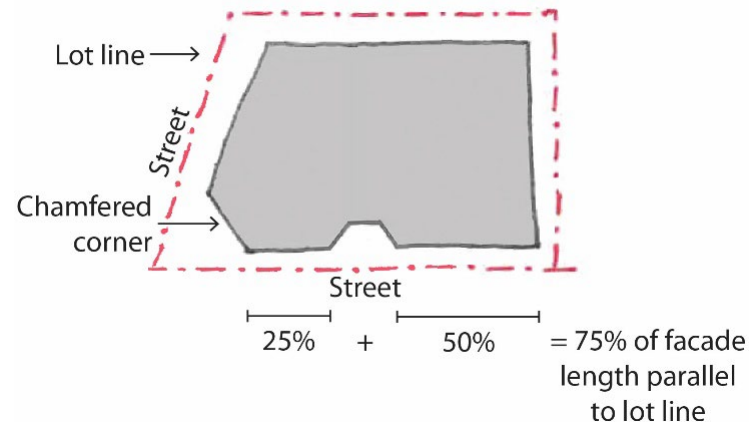
ODS Response – Mixed-Use Infill Footprint

MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL INFILL: SETTING, LOCATION & SITE DESIGN

Standard

The ground story shall be located parallel to the primary lot line for at least 75% of the length of the primary façade.

Curved or chamfered building façade corners are allowed when the structure is located on a corner lot.



Question 6

What aspects of design do you think help ensure that an infill building harmonizes with the surrounding neighborhood?

Question 6 Feedback

Participants felt the **most critical elements** for ensuring new commercial infill harmonizes with the neighborhood are **massing, setbacks, and height**.

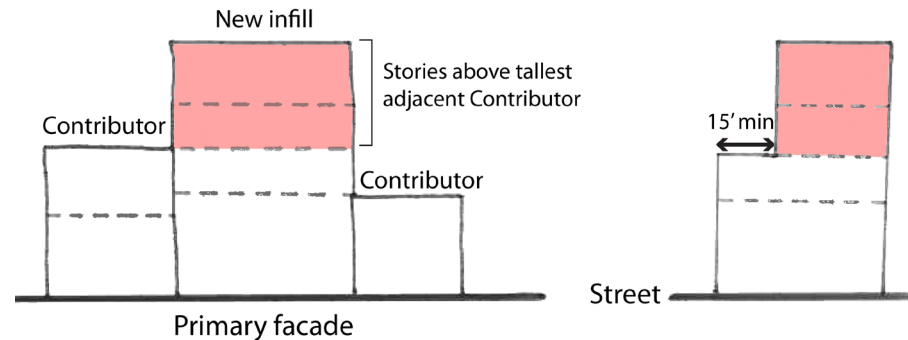
Other important factors included **cladding materials, façade articulation, and maintaining a uniform rhythm** at street level.

ODS Response – Mixed-Use Infill Harmonization

MIXED-USE INFILL: MASSING & ORIENTATION

Standard

For new mixed-use residential structures that **exceed the height of one or more adjacent Contributing properties**, all stories above the tallest adjacent Contributing property shall have a **stepback of no less than 15 feet from the primary façade**.

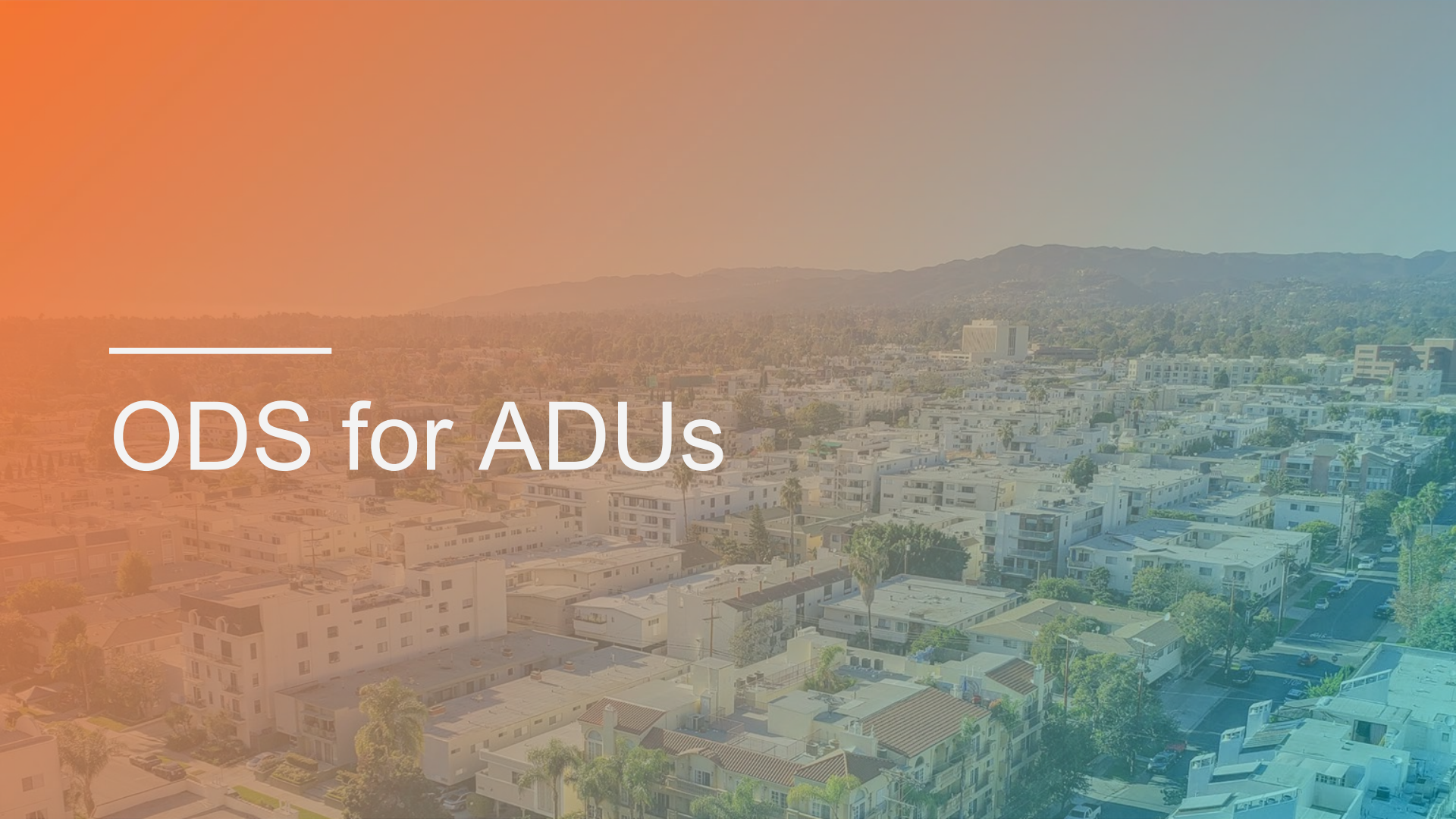


ODS Response – Mixed-Use Infill Harmonization

MIXED-USE INFILL: MASSING & ORIENTATION

Standard

New mixed-use residential structures that **exceed the height of one or more adjacent Contributing buildings** shall incorporate a **horizontal element**, either in the form of a change in material or a raised element with a minimum 2-inch profile, **aligned with one of the adjacent Contributing building** cornices or rooflines.

An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely Los Angeles, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a clear sky. The image is overlaid with a gradient that transitions from a warm orange on the left to a cool blue on the right. A horizontal white line is positioned above the text.

ODS for ADUs

ODS for ADUs

➤ Detached ADU Standards

- Siting/Location
- Massing
- Design

➤ Attached ADU Standards

- Siting/Location
- Massing
- Design

➤ JADU Standards

- Design

Detached ADU Standards

- Apply to new, free-standing ADUs and conversions/additions to existing accessory structures
- Unless in conflict with what is allowable under State law, the following standards apply:
 - Located behind the rear wall of the primary residence or attached to the side façade of an accessory structure
 - Less than the height of the primary residence
 - Roof form/material and wall cladding material shall match the primary residence or accessory structure (if attached to the accessory structure)
 - Flush-mount sliding windows are prohibited

Attached ADU Standards

- Apply to ADUs attached to existing primary residences
- Unless in conflict with what is allowable under State law, the following standards apply:
 - Attached to the rear wall of the primary residence
 - Less than the height of the primary residence
 - Stepped in from the side wall planes of the primary residence by at least 4'
 - Roof form/material and wall cladding material shall match the primary residence
 - Flush-mount sliding windows are prohibited

Junior ADU Standards

- The following standards apply:
 - New JADU entrances shall not be located on the front façade of the primary residence



Next Steps

Next Steps

- Public Comment Period – Open through July 21st
 - Submit comments via Google form, email, or letter
- Final Draft ODS – August
- Public Hearing / Cultural Heritage Commission / City Planning Commission – August to October
- Planning & Land Use Management / City Council – November to December

An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely Los Angeles, featuring numerous multi-story apartment buildings and houses. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a clear sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange-to-blue gradient. A white horizontal line is positioned above the text 'Q & A'.

Q & A

Questions

After reviewing the Draft ODS:

1. Do you feel there are topics that are missing? If so, please elaborate.
2. Which standards do you think will be most beneficial to your HPOZ? Please elaborate.
3. Is there a standard(s) that you think needs further refinement? Please elaborate.

Please use this Google form link to answer the above questions:

<https://forms.gle/rufSb7X87ehtgoSF6> *(form will be open through public comment period, ending July 21st)*

An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely Los Angeles, with numerous multi-story apartment buildings and houses. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a clear sky. The image has a color gradient overlay, transitioning from a warm orange on the left to a cool blue on the right.

Thank you!

Resources

Office of Historic Resources Contact Information

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