Overall

SAN MATEO

APRIL 6, 2023

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

MULTI-FAMILY AND MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

Community Meeting

1. Reducing Massing

REDUCING MASSING

1. Does building wall variation result in a building feeling appearing less massive? What is the right amount? Can there be too much?

2. What is the best way for the roof form to reduce the apparent massing? What forms are most effective?

3. What other techniques can reduce massing? Are colors/materials effective? Other?

Like:
- stepbacks
- stoops
- eyes to the streets
- parking in back of projects

Incorporate solar/ roof gardens/ community gardens on roofs

Use the Duplex Design Guidelines as a guide

Need setbacks in Downtown area. Use other cities that have done this well as examples.

For roof area of stebacks: would like to utilize that space for decks/ patios/open space

Some articulation/color/ design elements can get out of control, let's avoid that

More allowance for flexibility in architectural styles

Environmental aspects of construction should be considered

Don't like big box feel of new developments

wall offsets break up massing

Want standards that address how building aesthetics relate to other surrounding buildings, for example, we have art deco buildings Downtown that surrounded by "modern" designs

Would like to see projects that can coexist with existing neighborhoods - more compatibility (especially with windows - right now there is a lot of glazing in contemporary windows/developments)

Mixed-use buildings in Downtown are seeing a push to 5 story buildings, concerned about massing, losing the sun and increased shading because of larger buildings

Upper story setbacks that face adjacent low rise residential buildings can be problematic, adjacent residents may feel they are being observed from above and losing privacy.

Want bolder, braver design (especially in Downtown). San Mateo should be a world class city.

How can massing breaks be applied to duplexes and fourplexes? Can they be simplified to address affordability?

Incorporate traditional neighborhood elements into new developments

3. Open Space

OPEN SPACE

1. Should certain types of open space – passive vs. active – be required?
2. What amenities are desired?
3. What kinds of open space should be prioritized, such as communal space (common) or individual (private)?

Would like to see more open space where people of different ages can gather

Separate children's play areas from open space areas for adults

all residential landscaping should be setback and publicly visible

more common open space

concerned about construction of only new buildings and no open space

Look internationally for inspiration

Wind tunnel effect is real, especially downtown - design for this and perform wind studies

Blue bottle coffee in Bay Meadows is a good example of looking good on paper for people mingling - but in reality it is a real wind tunnel. Not a very pleasant place to hang out, which is a shame. Some wind studies beforehand might have helped (however Climate change may be upending that)

I live next door to a single family home that squished a ADU in the back yard leaving approx. a 5ft x 15ft yard for each resident (front and back). I wish they had pulled down the whole lot and done a 2-4 townhome with a permeable paving driveway and nice balconies

More porous paving and storm swales on-site to soak up water and offer planting areas for the residents (community gardens or even raised beds) to promote self sufficiency

How can open space be most usable? A high quality shared space vs. small individual yards?

Incorporate as much green space/nature into projects as possible, and don't just build buildings right to the street!

More trees! San Mateo is losing a lot of trees through densification and storms. Can San Mateo become a Tree City?

2. Good Transitions

GOOD TRANSITIONS

What creates a good transition to an immediately adjacent building?
-Step backs?
-Greater setbacks for all stories?
-Landscape screening?
-Other?

Incorporate historic architecture into new developments, including classic design and decorative elements that reflect the historic nature of development in San Mateo

Recent projects are large compared to single-family/ duplex neighborhoods. There is currently no buffering between them and there is a lack of transition from single-family homes to larger developments

A buffer area between town homes would be great.

Example of this: Bay Meadows

More transitional architecture in Downtown. For example, 180 E 3rd Street has a balance between new construction and maintaining historic architecture

Like: Stepping down and transitioning through building itself rather than landscaping

Take cues from existing buildings (especially in downtown) to maintain neighborhood compatibility

Need design standards related to landscaping maintenance

Don't lean on landscaping as a transitional element for smaller developments because the landscaping doesn't always happen

Currently a lack of transition between existing and new developments.

Could townhomes act as a transition?

4. Pedestrian Connections

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

1. What makes an entry residential in character?
   Stoop, porch, landscaping, meeting the street, overhead projection, window, door type?

2. Should paseos be used to break down the size/scale of blocks and provide pedestrian walkways? Do we like them and if so, would we like to see more?

Keep pedestrian access on B street in Downtown

Paseos act as a way to get back and forth between buildings/ places, and can reduce reliance on cars. Even better if they connect to transit.

Prioritize accessibility without cars

Paseos sound great, but "Main Street" seems to have fallen flat. Nice in photos, sad in reality.

Would it be possible to have more alleys and walkways that have delight and discovery, greenery, cafes, seating areas, small scale retail etc...

I have this crazy idea that North Central could have cars on the perimeter with trees and walking in the streets... little buses to get us into the City and to our cars...

More emphasis on the public/ pedestrian realm and public/ pedestrian spaces

Paseos are helpful

Let's look at other cities that do well with wide sidewalks, landscaping, and building frontages

Pedestrian access from Caltrain node to 3rd street and Central Park are key design areas

Paseos can help break down mass of building. Have them be more integrated

GENERAL COMMENTS

How can all of San Mateo have a sense of place, and not just the Downtown?

With the Housing Element and General Plan, spaces will be different years from now - how can we design now as the community grows and develops?

With housing going up on 5th Street, how does design incorporate train noise, open spaces, and residential areas?

Flexibility is key, especially for smaller developments!

San Mateo is missing middle housing

Some ODS for smaller developments can be cost prohibitive.

Developments of 5-6 units should have different requirements than large developments

There are varying degrees of flexibility in ODS - how will this be considered and how can developers meet those parameters?

Ex: Palo Alto has two different ways of evaluating projects

Allow option for alternate design/ approval process

Example: Palo Alto, San Carlos

Standards should not be one-size-fits-all

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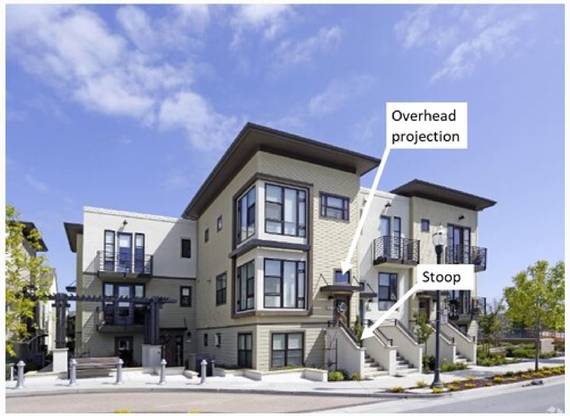

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