

# Design Guidelines

The design guidelines provide a general framework for the physical design of the Morena Corridor to ensure the creation of an active, high quality, pedestrian-friendly corridor. It is important to establish a strong set of design criteria that will create a place of distinction in the City.

The design guidelines should be used in conjunction with the development standards in Chapter [XX] of this Specific Plan to evaluate proposed developments. While the design guidelines promote a quality design, they are not a set of rigid requirements. They are general and illustrative in nature and are intended to provide flexibility to encourage creativity and variety through implementation. The design guidelines are organized into four main sections: public realm, site design, building design, and special treatments.

## 1.0 PUBLIC REALM

The public realm is the area between facing building facades. It includes the pedestrian, frontage, and amenity zones. These zones are critical to the pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists experience along the street. Therefore, careful attention to the design of each zone will contribute to the look and feel and level of activity within the Morena Corridor.

The width of the public realm should be commensurate with the level of pedestrian activity desired for the specific street frontage, so long as a 5-foot-wide clear pedestrian walkway (the “pedestrian zone”) is maintained. Adequate clear space is needed to allow for a comfortable and leisurely walking pace. Each zone is described below and illustrated on the following page.

### **Amenity Zone**

The amenity zone may include trees, planters, lighting, street furniture, pedestrian amenities, street signs, and other public utilities as conditions feasibly allow. In certain situations, sidewalk cafes and other commercial activities may be allowed to extend into the amenity zone rather than the frontage zone, or where extra wide sidewalks occur, in both the frontage and amenity zones, so long as a 5-foot-wide clear pedestrian pathway is maintained.

### **Pedestrian Zone**

The pedestrian zone consists of a minimum 5-foot clear and unobstructed path, depending on the street standard. The primary purpose of the pedestrian zone is to accommodate pedestrian movement and ensure safe and efficient pedestrian connections throughout the Corridor. Architectural projections and outdoor dining may encroach into the pedestrian zone so long as a minimum 5-foot clear path and 7-foot vertical clearance is maintained. Protection of an adequate clear pedestrian zone shall be prioritized to provide a throughway for movement of pedestrians. The pedestrian zone is within the public right-of-way and may be a combination of public property and private property with a public easement.

### **Frontage Zone**

The frontage zone is the area between the ground floor of the building façade and the right-of-way (ROW). This space is typically used as the primary entry to adjacent buildings and may include outdoor dining and display space, plazas and courtyards, and or landscaping.

## 1.1 PEDESTRIAN ZONE

- 1.1.1 The pedestrian zone should comprise at least 50 percent of the sidewalk but never be less than 5 feet, as is feasible within the applicable right-of-way.
- 1.1.2 Maintain a 5-foot clear walking zone by placing streetscape amenities, including street furniture, utility poles, traffic signs, landscaping, etc., in the public amenity zone.
- 1.1.3 Maintain a minimum vertical height clearance of 7 feet, clear of overhanging tree limbs, protruding fixtures such as awnings, umbrellas, signs, or other horizontal obstruction, in the pedestrian zone.
- 1.1.4 To ensure pedestrian safety and smooth flow of traffic, transitions in the width of the pedestrian zone should not be abrupt and should be signaled by some sort of transitional element such as pavement marking, landscaping or signage.
- 1.1.5 Encourage outdoor cafes and dining areas along street sidewalks as appropriate within the district character, where they do not encroach upon the minimum pedestrian walkway width for the street such as along Morena Boulevard.
- 1.1.6 Encourage curb extensions at intersections as a means of expanding the pedestrian zone where pedestrians are likely to congregate while waiting for transit or to cross the street such as at Ingulf Street, Ashton Street, Knoxville Street and others.
- 1.1.7 All new development and redevelopment shall include new sidewalks and/or sidewalk widening per the Morena Corridor roadway cross-section standards and any other applicable City regulation.
- 1.1.8 The design and composition of sidewalk paving must maintain smooth and level surfaces that meet universal accessibility requirements, and have a non-slippery surface when wet.

## 1.2 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Landscape architecture addresses the design of outdoor areas, such as streets, private and public open space areas, and parking lots. It involves the purposeful interplay of plant material, furnishings, lighting, signage, landmarks, and other public amenities. This Specific Plan incorporates design principles of composition to create an environment that is safe, comfortable, attractive, and reflects the overall character of the Morena Corridor and surrounding community. The following landscape design standards and guidelines are provided to enhance the Corridor and create a sustainable environment through responsible design practices.

- 1.2.1 Entry spaces, transitional spaces, and gathering spaces should incorporate appropriate landscape architecture elements such as gateways, fountains, and other public amenities to establish a strong sense of identity and way finding throughout the site.
- 1.2.2 Use landscaping to highlight building facades; soften building contours; screen less attractive elements; add color, texture, and visual interest; and provide shade. Integrated planter boxes in recessed storefronts and second floor windows are one example of how to achieve this.
- 1.2.3 Define the spatial organization of the site with landscaping at the edges of paths and open space areas.
- 1.2.4 Selected planting and finishes appropriate to the type and volume of use. Durability of the landscaping is a key component of how the space will be used and maintained long after implementation.

- 1.2.5 Incorporate high-quality paving materials in open space areas, such as stone, brick, colored concrete or tile that is permeable whenever possible. Special paving should be incorporated into parking lot design, driveway entries, pedestrian walkways, crosswalks, intersections, and plazas, where feasible.
- 1.2.6 Landscaped areas requiring irrigation systems should utilize high efficiency irrigation systems such as drip and bubbler irrigation and low-angle, low-flow spray heads.
- 1.2.7 Utilize permeable ground surfaces in open spaces to the extent possible and install materials that allow access in all weather conditions. The use of permeable paving is encouraged for the reduction of stormwater runoff and absorption of rainwater to the water table. Where it is not possible to provide significant permeable areas on site, collection, storage, and re-use of stormwater should be considered.
- 1.2.8 The incorporation of bio-filtration and bio-retention measures in parking lot design, edges of paved areas, and other landscaped areas is encouraged to slow and treat stormwater runoff.
- 1.2.9 Design streetscape improvements to match the existing hardscape, sidewalk paving, and street furniture.
- 1.2.10 Preserve existing and mature trees in good health and appearance and incorporate them into the landscape design.
- 1.2.11 Locate street trees between the curb and sidewalk to create a psychological barrier between the sidewalk and the street.
- 1.2.12 Provide trees along the street and incorporate them within public outdoor spaces to provide shade.
- 1.2.13 Street furniture such as benches and trash receptacles should brand the Morena Corridor but shall be consistent with the City standard.
- 1.2.14 Use traditional materials which interrelate to the existing hardscape (i.e., brick or modular paved; no stamped concrete).

### **1.3 OPEN SPACE—PUBLIC**

- 1.3.1 Common open spaces should contribute to an open space network linked by public streets, pedestrian pathways, and public access points and locate them in prominent and easily accessible places. Direct access should be provided to the open space from a pedestrian pathway where possible.
- 1.3.2 Incorporate public open spaces, such as plazas, arcades, and paseos, into the public right-of-way in areas partially visible from the street, or link to the street by a clear circulation element such as an open passage or covered arcade.
- 1.3.3 The provision of common open spaces should take into account other recreational spaces and facilities in the area and provide publicly accessible open spaces that may be shared.
- 1.3.4 Provide for a mix of passive and active recreational facilities in a variety of forms, including parks, squares, plazas, and courtyards at the ground-floor level and/or on rooftops.
- 1.3.5 Design open spaces to promote a visually pleasing, safe, secure, accessible, and active environment.
- 1.3.6 Emphasize solar access and shade orientation from the principal area of the open space.
- 1.3.7 Consider ease of maintenance and usability in the design of open spaces.

- 1.3.8 Incorporate amenities into open space areas that facilitate outdoor activities and contribute to human comfort (such as permanent and/or movable seating, as long as it does not obstruct movement). Installation of fountains, sculptures, and other features are encouraged to add interest to the space.
- 1.3.9 Courtyards should supplement rather than take away from street activity.
- 1.3.10 The edges of courtyard spaces should contain retail stores, restaurants, offices, or other activities that encourage pedestrian activity. Blank walls and spaces without pedestrian interest must be minimized.
- 1.3.11 A perimeter feature such as a low hedge or seat wall may be included along the edge of a park or plaza, but fencing is prohibited unless hours are restricted.
- 1.3.12 String lights (non-blinking) can be used to accent trees or trellises within public spaces to create a festive atmosphere at night.

## 1.4 SIGNAGE

Signs within the Morena Corridor are intended to help define a distinct identity and brand and to establish a lively, contemporary pedestrian oriented atmosphere. The signage standards in this section are intended to appropriately limit the placement, type, and size, of signs allowed within a particular project within the Specific Plan area. Signs shall comply with Section §142.12 of the City of San Diego Land Development Code.

### GENERAL STANDARDS

- 1.4.1 Canned signs are prohibited. Illuminated channel letters should be used instead.
- 1.4.2 All signs shall be maintained in good repair.

### PROJECT IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

- 1.4.3 Secondary Project Identification Signs are permitted only in retail centers and other projects that front on two or more public streets. Retail centers and other projects that front on only one public street are not eligible for Secondary Project Identification Signage. No more than one Secondary Project Identification Sign is permitted per street frontage. In addition, a project must contain at least 150,000 square feet of leasable or usable floor area (excluding covered or structured parking areas, covered loading/unloading areas, and covered trash enclosures) to qualify for both Primary and Secondary Project Identification Signs. In no case shall any project have more than two Secondary Project Identification Signs. Sign may be double sided.

### MONUMENT/GROUND SIGNS

- 1.4.4 Number of Signs: One freestanding Monument/Ground Sign is permitted for each single-tenant pad. Monument/Ground Signs shall not be permitted on projects qualifying for Primary Project and Secondary Project Identification Signs. Monument/Ground Signs are intended for use on freestanding pads only.

### WALL SIGNS

- 1.4.5 Number of Signs: The total number of Wall Signs shall be no greater than the number of tenants in said building with except for the following:

- Tenants with a floor area of greater than 20,000 sq. ft. may have up to one wall mounted sign for each building face, provided that no building shall be deemed to have more than three building faces.

## BLADE SIGNS

- 1.4.6 Number of Signs: No more than one blade sign shall be permitted per building entry (excludes employee, service, and emergency entries).
- 1.4.7 Canopy/Awning Signs: Awnings and canopies are permitted, but may not be used as signage (no text or logos permitted). However, blade signs may be erected under awnings and canopies.
- 1.4.8 Window & Door Signs: White vinyl letters are permitted on doors only. Letters shall not exceed 3 ft in height. No lettering or logos are permitted on windows.
- 1.4.9 Directional Safety, Warning, or Information Signs (On Private Property Only): Directional/Information Signs shall not exceed seven feet in height. Signs may be double sided. The entire sign (including message area and sign structure) shall not exceed 20 square feet in area. Directional/Information Signs shall be externally lighted. No internal or neon lighting is permitted.
- 1.4.10 Directional Safety, Warning, or Information Signs (within Public Rights-of-Way Only): Directional/Information Signs within public rights-of-way may consist of either freestanding kiosks or pole-mounted signs or banners/signs erected on light standards.

## 1.5 PUBLIC ART

- 1.5.1 Incorporate public art into private, semi-private, and public open space areas to create identity and visual interest. Public art may consist of both permanent and temporary installations and should provide a contextual understanding of and be clearly related to the overall network of public art in the community.
- 1.5.2 Integrate public art into a project's design at an early stage of development to ensure cohesiveness of site design, architecture, art, landscape, and public space.
- 1.5.3 Develop public art in the most accessible and visible places and consider it in relation to other visual elements and cues such as signage, without obstructing drivers' view of traffic control devices, being a distraction, or being located in a manner that could create a roadside hazard to motorists.
- 1.5.4 Encourage sustainable, maintainable works of art that aspire to the highest standards of innovation and aesthetic quality.

## 1.6 OUTDOOR DINING AND DISPLAYS

- 1.6.1 Outdoor dining, sandwich boards, etc. shall be permitted to encroach into the public right-of-way only if a minimum of a 5-foot clear walking zone is maintained.
- 1.6.2 Outdoor dining may extend into the public right-of-way; however, dining shall be non-contiguous and a clear, unobstructed pedestrian pathway shall be maintained.
- 1.6.3 A clear distinction should be maintained between dining area and the public sidewalk through the use of planters and/or physical barriers.

- 1.6.4 All new fencing must be of durable material, fire safe, structurally sound, and aesthetically pleasing and no more than 3 feet in height.
- 1.6.5 Outdoor dining facilities and equipment shall be of a quality and style that contributes to the Corridor's character and the intent of this Specific Plan. The design, quality, materials and colors used for chairs, tables, lighting and other fixtures shall complement the architectural style and colors used on the adjacent buildings.
- 1.6.6 Portable umbrellas may be permitted within outdoor dining areas provided they maintain a 7-foot vertical clearance and do not obstruct the public right-of-way or walkway, and do not contain advertising.

## 1.7 FURNISHINGS

Furnishings are elements in the landscape intended to enhance the functionality of the streetscape and promote the use of common open spaces for informal and neighborly gathering. Furnishings include seating, tables, trash/recycle receptacles, tree grates, tree guards, bollards, bike racks, drinking fountains, and bus shelters. The placement and orientation of furnishings, in conjunction with signage and light fixtures, should consider the convenience, comfort, and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists and address neighborhood design objectives as well as physical, operational, and environmental factors.

- 1.7.1 Street furniture shall be placed within the amenity zone to the extent possible. Furnishings may also be placed within frontage zones. Encroachments into the pedestrian zone are allowed with a Sign permit/Process One provided a minimum 5 feet of clear pedestrian path is maintained.
- 1.7.2 Pedestrian-oriented streets and areas with high pedestrian activity shall provide appropriate seating at intervals of 300ft. to be sufficient to provide adequate rest for pedestrians.
- 1.7.3 Seating shall be placed in areas with shade, trees, and lighting to provide a safe and attractive place of rest for pedestrians. Seating areas may be enhanced with seat walls, landscape planters, fountains, and trellises.
- 1.7.4 Seating shall be oriented to face pedestrian walkways and/or create gathering spaces. Where back of seating is adjacent to the street, a planted buffer shall be placed between the back of the seating and street.
- 1.7.5 Transit stops should provide shelter from natural elements, seating, lighting and signage. Bus stop seating should be oriented toward the street with clear visibility of approaching buses and have a 3- to 5-foot clearance from the curb.
- 1.7.6 Trash and recycling bins shall be placed in visible and easily reachable locations and should be present at all public seating areas. The use of solar powered receptacles and compactors is encouraged.
- 1.7.7 Place bike racks in groups with ample space provided per bike and adequate pedestrian clearance, and locate them at strategic points throughout the project. Establishing a rack design that employs a theme unique to Morena Corridor brand to enhance identity is highly encouraged.

## 2.0 SITE DESIGN

### 2.1 BUILDING PLACEMENT, ORIENTATION, AND ACCESS

The placement of buildings and building entrances largely determine the functionality and accessibility of the site. Careful consideration of movement patterns, external spaces, use of space, and the environment is important when situating a building on a site. Proper building placement and orientation is also central to sustainable site design as it can minimize energy consumption and encourage pedestrian activity by relating well to its site, the surrounding environment, and the climate.

- 2.1.1 Buildings shall be located to front directly onto and be oriented to public streets, pedestrian pathways, and/or common open space.
- 2.1.2 Provide a well-marked, publicly accessible path of travel between parking areas, buildings, and sidewalks.
- 2.1.3 Design vehicular access to each site to minimize conflicts with pedestrians. Sight lines, curb cut locations, designated pedestrian walkways, driveway widths, and lighting are factors to consider in final site designs. Limit the number of entrance and exit points and mark them lights that do not obstruct views from drivers or pedestrians.
- 2.1.4 Shared driveway access for nonresidential uses is encouraged to reduce curb cuts.
- 2.1.5 Locate parking lot access points as far as possible from street intersections to allow adequate stacking room.
- 2.1.6 Avoid dead end drive aisles.
- 2.1.7 Encourage colored, textured, and/or permeable paving treatments at entry drives to create a sense of arrival and slow traffic.
- 2.1.8 Provide design cues along pedestrian connections to help demarcate the transition between public and private spaces. These can include a change in colors, materials, landscaping, or the dimensions of the space.
- 2.1.9 Provide safe and convenient pedestrian connections between buildings, public open spaces, and parking areas and to off-site public sidewalks. These areas should be visually emphasized through the use of landscaping, lighting, and/or distinctive paving.
- 2.1.10 Preserve and emphasize pedestrian connectivity when transitioning between neighborhoods and differing land uses.

### 2.2 PARKING

Parking configuration, placement, and access is essential to the function and vitality of a neighborhood. In particular, visibility of parking areas has a significant impact on the character and vitality of street life. Parking areas can also provide significant opportunities for environmental improvement with proper placement and landscape treatment.

- 2.2.1 Prohibit surface parking at the corners of corner sites; provide surface parking lots behind the building to limit their visibility from public streets and take advantage of building shade to reduce heat buildup during hot afternoons.

- 2.2.2 Parking structures which must be located on public street frontages should be designed with the following strategies:
- Place short dimension along the street edge.
  - Develop activities such as shops, offices, or other commercial space along the ground-level of street frontage or provide a planted patio space between the structure and the street.
  - Facades along upper floors of parking structures should be designed with features to screen views of vehicles.
- 2.2.3 Design private parking with access through an alley where possible.
- 2.2.4 Share parking and loading access when feasible and locate access points a minimum of 25 feet from a primary building entrance, pedestrian pathway, or public outdoor gathering area. Incorporate sustainable design features in landscaping and design of parking lots, such as permeable paving, bioswales, and native landscaping where feasible, to prevent water runoff, reduce solar heat gain, and minimize the need for extensive maintenance.
- 2.2.5 Define parking areas with plant materials and low walls.
- 2.2.6 In parking areas over 6,000 square feet, interior landscaping should be provided to screen and visually separate the parking areas into smaller increments.

## 2.3 OPEN SPACE—PRIVATE

Provision of common open space is essential to the enhancing the green and pedestrian-friendly environment throughout the Morena Corridor. New development should contribute to the creation of open spaces that are accessible, attractive, safe, and comfortable for their users. Access to adequate and safe public open spaces is essential for the well-being of the whole community as it provides opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and meeting places. Many sustainable features can be incorporated into the design of open spaces to maximize environmental benefits and ensure ease of maintenance.

- 2.3.1 Projects shall develop a comprehensive open space network that uses open space areas to connect uses. Examples include on-site plazas, patios, courtyards, paseos, terraces, gardens, and other open spaces that support pedestrian activity and community interaction.
- 2.3.2 Common open spaces should be located in prominent and easily accessible places. Direct access shall be provided to the open space from a pedestrian pathway where possible.
- 2.3.3 Outdoor pedestrian spaces should be well defined by buildings and landscaping, comfortably scaled, landscaped for shade and ornament, furnished with areas for sitting, lighted for evening use, and meet ADA requirements.
- 2.3.4 Open spaces should be designed appropriate to its context taking into consideration solar and shade orientation, inclement weather, public access, safety and security, ease of maintenance, usability, and aesthetic quality.
- 2.3.5 Open spaces should provide for a mix of passive and active recreational facilities in a variety of forms including parks, squares, plazas, and courtyards at the ground-floor level and/or on rooftops.
- 2.3.6 The provision of common open spaces should take into account other recreational spaces and facilities in the area and provide publicly accessible open spaces that may be shared.

- 2.3.7 Make open spaces publicly accessible during daylight hours and tie them into the City's network of public parks and public spaces when feasible.
- 2.3.8 Open spaces shall include substantial areas for landscaping to provide greenery and shade.
- 2.3.9 Open spaces shall incorporate amenities that facilitate outdoor activities including permanent and/or movable seating that is placed with consideration to sun and shade, and other factors contributing to human comfort. Installation of fountains and other features are encouraged to add interest to the space.
- 2.3.10 Ground surfaces in open spaces should be permeable to the extent possible and utilize materials to allow access in all weather conditions. The use of permeable paving is encouraged for the reduction of stormwater runoff and absorption of rainwater to the water table. Where it is not possible to provide significant permeable areas on site, collection, storage and re-use of stormwater should be considered.

## **2.4 FENCES AND WALLS**

Walls and fences are typically freestanding structures used to delineate spaces and buffer adjacent uses. Careful design and placement of walls and fences can enhance the visual appeal of the community while providing safety, security, and privacy.

- 2.4.1 Solid walls and fences shall not dominate the street scene. They should only be used when landscaping is insufficient and/or impractical for noise attenuation, privacy, and shielding of incompatible adjacent uses.
- 2.4.2 Walls and fences should provide pedestrian gates or openings to ensure ease of pedestrian circulation. Bollards may be used at openings to restrict vehicular access. Pilasters should be used to clearly identify gates and openings.
- 2.4.3 Walls and fences adjacent to open space areas and pedestrian paths shall utilize non-view-obscuring design and materials to preserve views and maintain visibility for safety.
- 2.4.4 Walls should be designed to relieve visual monotony. This can be accomplished through the use of color, texture, material, surface articulation, and intermittent undulation. The use of pilasters and view fencing along walls is encouraged.
- 2.4.5 Soften the visual appearance of walls and fences and prevent graffiti using trees, vines, and landscaping.
- 2.4.6 Walls and fences should be constructed of durable materials and designed to be visually attractive and complement the adjacent architecture.
- 2.4.7 Chain-link fences and precision block walls are not permitted.
- 2.4.8 The color, texture, pattern, and dimension of masonry columns and bases, and the color, width, type, and elevation of mortar joints in fence column or base must match the masonry and mortar joints of the main building as nearly as practical.
- 2.4.9 Wood fences must have structure posts at least four inches in diameter (nominal size). The side of a wooden fence facing a public street must be the finished side. Wooden fences may be painted or stained a color that is complementary to the main building.
- 2.4.10 Parapet walls may be used to screen views of roof-mounted utilities.

2.4.11 Decorative masonry walls should be used to screen areas used for trash storage and disposal and equipment storage.

## **2.5 SERVICE AND LOADING AREAS AND UTILITIES**

- 2.5.1 Maintain and carefully design, locate, and integrate service and loading areas into the site plan so they do not detract from the street scene or create a nuisance for adjacent property owners or vehicle traffic. Service and loading areas viewable from public spaces should be shielded with landscaping, attractive walls, or decorative screening, particularly when adjacent to or visible from residential uses.
- 2.5.2 Access service and loading areas through an alley where possible. Where an alley is not present, a private service road may be provided for access.
- 2.5.3 Design service and loading areas so service vehicles have clear and convenient access and do not block adjacent vehicular or pedestrian circulation.
- 2.5.4 Design service and loading access points and doors as an integral component of the facade and use materials fitting with other materials used throughout the building.
- 2.5.5 Include trash, service, and utility closets and enclosures as an integral part of the building design and orient away from existing residential development. All enclosing gates should be solid, and any colors and materials should be compatible with the existing development, unless otherwise approved by the City.
- 2.5.6 Encourage masonry refuse containers with trellis or other decorative roofs.
- 2.5.7 Discourage rooftop mechanical equipment, but if used, its design and screening should incorporate the building's materials and design.

## **2.6 ALLEYS**

- 2.6.1 Alleys should be designed as shared public ways wherever possible and be used to provide delivery access to businesses.
- 2.6.2 Use alleys to integrate stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) wherever possible.

## **2.7 DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TRANSIT STATIONS**

- 2.7.1 Locate active commercial uses on the ground floor of buildings to enliven the pedestrian environment and provide retail experiences and services to transit users.
- 2.7.2 Incorporate enhanced pedestrian lighting into the design of new projects to augment the safety of the station area.
- 2.7.3 Encourage the design of plazas, with seating and landscape elements, at the corners of buildings adjacent to transit station areas to provide public open space for residents, visitors, and transit users. These plazas should be complemented with active retail such as coffee shops, restaurants, etc.
- 2.7.4 Integrate transit amenities such as bus stops, seating, bike racks, bike storage, and showers into new projects to promote the use of alternative transportation and facilitate alternative transportation network connections.

## 3.0 BUILDING DESIGN AND ARTICULATION

Building articulation refers to the design elements of a building that help create an interesting public realm. Ground-floor building articulation is critical in creating an inviting street that encourages pedestrian activity by providing visual interest and a sense of security. Articulation on the upper stories of low and mid-rise buildings can help frame the street and create visual interest. Elements of building articulation include frontage treatments, corner treatments, facade elements and modulation, and building materials.

### FRONTAGE

Frontage is an important element of urban design because it is the way that a building engages the public realm at the ground-floor level. Building frontage includes the design of building elements and landscape features between the front facade of the building and the public realm. The arrangement and design of building frontages largely determines the character of the area and the quality of the pedestrian environment. They are also the means of access into buildings and consequently visually reinforce their human scale. The intent of regulating building frontages is to ensure that the transition between the proposed development and the public realm is consistent with the Specific Plan's goals for building form, character and quality.

This Specific Plan provides design standards for frontage type to encourage proposed development to relate to the street as appropriate and meet community design objectives. These design standards are intended to provide for a range of development frontage types that will reinforce the desired character along the Morena Corridor over time.

These frontage design standards should be used in concert with other development and design standards herein. While this Specific Plan provides for a variety of frontage types, the actual choice and design of the frontage is a decision of the property owner based on the proposed uses, site plan, and building design. Frontages can adapt as uses changes; they do not require complete reconstruction of a building. Design standards and examples of the six frontage types identified for the Morena Corridor—Terrace, Stoop, Shopfront, Forecourt, Gallery—are presented on the following pages in Figures 1 through 5.

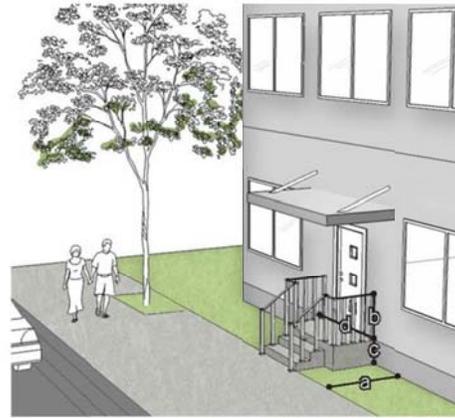
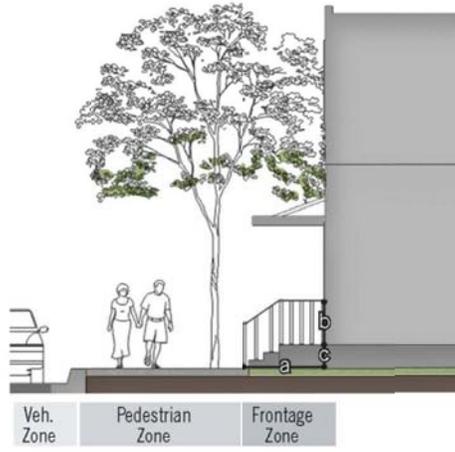
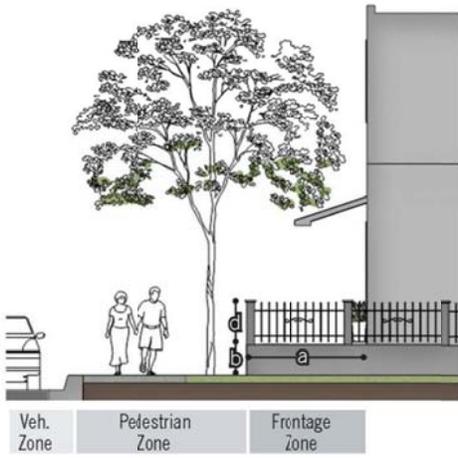


Figure 1: Stoop Frontage

Figure 2: Terrace Frontage

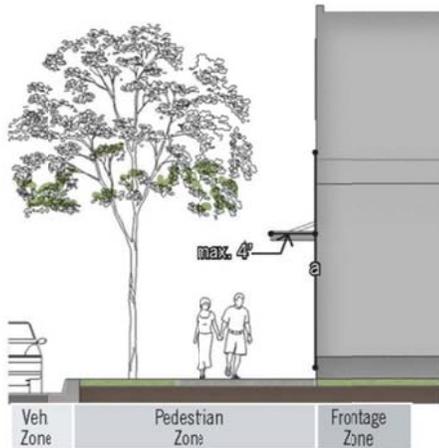


Figure 3: Shopfront Frontage

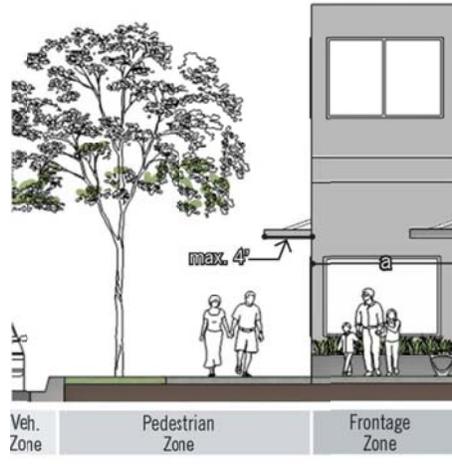


Figure 4: Forecourt Frontage

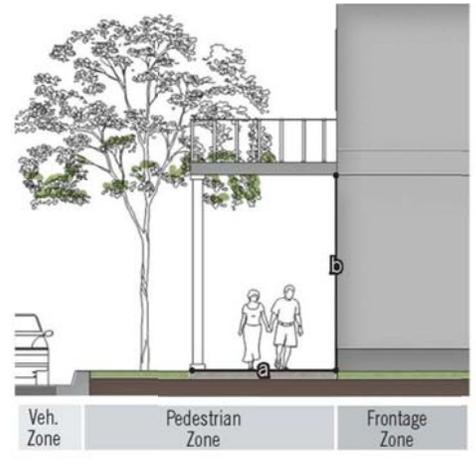


Figure 5: Galley Frontage



### 3.1 STANDARDS FOR FRONTAGE TYPES:

- 3.1.1 Frontage types should be built to fit within the context and intended character of the street. The first two floors of every primary building façade should be within the frontage zone with the exception of forecourt and arcade frontage types. The third-floor facade should adhere to the applicable frontage design principles.
- 3.1.2 Non-primary building walls should be consistent in design with the primary building front.
- 3.1.3 Canopies, awnings, signs, balconies, and other architectural projections should be located at least 7 feet above the adjacent sidewalk.
- 3.1.4 Private furnishings permitted in the frontage zone may include seating and tables, planters, art, and portable signage, so long as a 5-foot-wide pedestrian space is maintained.
- 3.1.5 Sidewalk cafes that have more formal dining facilities (i.e., offer waiter service to their tables) or more than a single row of tables should provide a decorative element, such as a railing, rope divider, etc., that delineates the café from the pedestrian travel zone (this is a state requirement for serving alcohol). Such delineation is not required for less formal eateries such as cafes, coffee shops, and sandwich shops that have a single row of chairs and tables.
- 3.1.6 If there is insufficient frontage zone space to accommodate private uses such as cafes, additional area should be taken from the private realm rather than constrain the function or character of the pedestrian

and amenity zones. In all cases, a 5-foot-wide direct path must be provided for pedestrians and the disabled.

- 3.1.7 Where facades of buildings front on two parallel streets or on corners the building on the primary street should be considered the front elevation (excluding alleys). The building on the secondary street should be detailed but be considered a secondary façade.
- 3.1.8 Elevate ground floor residential units above the pedestrian eye-level by three steps (21 inches) to give residents a “higher ground” and enhance privacy and security from pedestrian thru-traffic. Features to help accomplish this may include stoops, porches, or subterranean parking under housing complexes.
- 3.1.9 At sidewalk level, buildings should be primarily transparent. A minimum of 50% of all commercial first floor facades with street frontage should consist of pedestrian entrances, display windows, or windows affording views into retail, offices, gallery, or lobby space (does not apply to ground floor residential uses).

## **3.2 ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL - FAÇADE DESIGN AND COMPOSITION**

Façade generally refers to the exterior side of a building which faces a public street or open space and is often the most important from a design standpoint as it sets the tone for the rest of the building and the neighborhood. The design and composition of façades involves the arrangement of architectural elements such as doors, windows, caps, and pilasters on the walls of buildings. It provides visual cues that support navigability and mobility for pedestrians, thereby enhancing the safety, convenience, and comfort of the public realm.

- 3.2.1 Promote visual diversity through the use of complementary architectural styles.
- 3.2.2 In areas where a predominant building style is not apparent or desirable, new development should not be so different in character that it is visually incompatible with existing development.
- 3.2.3 A variety of architectural design features, techniques, patterns, materials, and color should be used to create visual interest and varied experience, provided the uses of such features are coordinated, related to the overall design of the structure, and result in a unified design.
- 3.2.4 Architectural elements and accents should be appropriate for the overall building design and form an integral part of the building. The use of discrete awnings, canopies, and overhangs are encouraged to provide visual appeal and protection from the weather.
- 3.2.5 The entire lowermost (base) and uppermost (top) floor or two floors of façades shall be visibly articulated to aesthetically anchor the building to the ground and complete the building at the top. The number of floors articulated at the building base and top should be equal.
- 3.2.6 All façades of buildings visible from a public street or open space should maintain the same level of architectural detail and visual quality used on a front façade.
- 3.2.7 The façade detailing of mixed-use buildings should visually differentiate ground-floor uses from upper-story residential uses.
- 3.2.8 Building elevations on individual units within a multifamily residential development should have varied design elements with a unified design theme.
- 3.2.9 Avoid replicating building elevations across the street from each other or on adjacent parcels.

### **3.3 NEW BUILDINGS ADJACENT TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

- 3.3.1 New development built on or adjacent to designated historic sites or older buildings of substantial historic character should consider the compatibility of size, shape, scale, materials, details, textures, colors, roof form, and landscape features of the historic building(s).
- 3.3.2 New buildings should step down to a compatible height as the historic building and should accentuate horizontal elements, such as eave height, of the historic building into the new building.
- 3.3.3 New development should reference historic buildings by adopting some of the historic techniques in the new buildings. Roof slopes, building mass, windows, and door proportions are some elements that can be replicated and assist in creating a visual connection.

### **3.4 BUILDING MASSING AND ARTICULATION**

Form and massing addresses the overall shape and size of a building in terms of scale, bulkiness, and relationship to exterior spaces. Buildings can appear monotonous or oppressive if care is not taken to articulate the building form. Consideration of buildings in the surrounding vicinity, topographical conditions, and site specific landscape features also assist in design compatibility with the site and neighborhood. Proper massing of a building also plays a role in passive sustainable design strategies as it helps to minimize energy loads and maximize energy from the sun and wind.

- 3.4.1 Design buildings to be compatible with the height, massing, and character of surrounding area. New development should contribute to the visual quality and cohesiveness of its setting.
- 3.4.2 Achieve vertical articulation of facades through recessed façade elements, balconies, and changes in wall materials and colors.
- 3.4.3 Use appropriate and adequate variation in setbacks, frontal planes, massing, corner cuts, and building footprints to minimize bulk, promote visibility, allow block transparency, and create variety with rhythm and order.
- 3.4.4 Use projections such as entrances, bays, stairs, balconies, and arcades to emphasize important architectural features.
- 3.4.5 Reserve taller building elements, such as towers, for areas of visual focus such as corners or terminating views.

### **3.5 ENTRYWAYS**

- 3.5.1 Primary entrances to buildings should be from the public street to the extent possible. Secondary building entrances should be provided internally from within the site, but should not be more prominent than front primary entrances.
- 3.5.2 Locate all entrances symmetrically within an expressed building bay, for frontages less than 25 feet in width, in which case the entrance may be asymmetrical.
- 3.5.3 Design primary building entryways to be accessible for people with disabilities and adhere to the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- 3.5.4 Design entrances to be easily accessible, prominent, and identifiable with architectural definition such as an awning, a recessed niche, or other shelter projection elements not exceeding 4 feet.

- 3.5.5 Enhance rear building entrances with landscape, hardscape, and/or awnings to protect and create an inviting secondary entrance, when provided.
- 3.5.6 Provide access to the primary entry to upper floor residential units from the pedestrian level of the primary street or pedestrian walkway by either an open or enclosed stairway; entrances to residential units in mixed-use buildings should have a separate main entrance located on the primary street.
- 3.5.7 Create a clear safe path between bicycle parking areas and entrances from the street.
- 3.5.8 Narrow framed doors or anodized aluminum frontages are prohibited.

## **3.6 WINDOWS AND DOORS**

- 3.6.1 Employ variety, scale, and rhythm to windows, doors and other openings to improve building character, especially for large expanses of exterior building surfaces.
- 3.6.2 Façade openings and windows should be vertically proportioned, with a greater height than width. Appropriate height-width ratios typically range from 1.5:1 to 2:1.
- 3.6.3 Use larger window proportions for ground floor retail windows than for upper floor windows; enhance upper floor windows with architectural details such as cornices, sills, molded surrounds, recesses, reveals, and lintels.
- 3.6.4 Doors at building entrances should include windows that permit views into the establishment.
- 3.6.5 Doors at storefronts with windows should match the materials, design, and character of the display window framing.
- 3.6.6 Design service or employee doors that are visible from public areas as an integral part of the building design.
- 3.6.7 Security bars, if needed, should not be mounted on the exterior of the building.

## **3.7 ROOFS**

- 3.7.1 Utilize roof color and materials compatible with building style; recommended roof materials include metal seam roofing, terra cotta or concrete tile, and tar and gravel (for flat roofs which are not visible from the street or adjacent buildings).
- 3.7.2 Green roofs should be considered to increase greenspace, reduce energy consumption, and minimize visual impacts from other buildings.
- 3.7.3 Provide visual interest and reduce the overall mass of the building with variations in roof form, height, and profiles. Overly complex and distracting roofs are not encouraged.
- 3.7.4 Treat parapet walls as an integral part of the building design, and unnecessary height and bulk should be avoided. Where mansard roofs are incorporated into the parapet design.
- 3.7.5 Exposed rooftops should be treated as building elevations, and their texture and material should complement those used for walls and other building elements. Such rooftops should be free of mechanical equipment clutter where it may be visible from surrounding buildings and streets.
- 3.7.6 Incorporate roof drainage components into the overall architectural composition of the façade and roof.

- 3.7.7 Provide access and walkways to serve and replace any rooftop equipment. Rooftop equipment should be concealed with a wall or other screening feature that matches the architecture of the building.

## **3.8 MATERIALS AND COLOR**

The colors and materials of buildings can effectively create a streetscape of interest when applied appropriately and in partnership with façade modulation. The use of quality materials not only last longer and wear better but also preserve the quality of the public realm to create timeless designs for the comfort and enjoyment of the community.

- 3.8.1 Use variation in colors and materials to create visual façade articulation and/or accentuate architectural details (e.g., trim or awnings) of the building. However, no more than two colors and two materials may be used per elevation.
- 3.8.2 Select colors consistent with the building style and compatible with the landscape and buildings in the surrounding vicinity. Appropriate colors include off-white, natural brick and wood tones, darker pastels, and earth tones.
- 3.8.3 Allow accent colors, other than those in the color palette, for doors, window frames, and other detailing, provided such building accents do not exceed 10% of any exterior building elevations. Recommended secondary and/or accent materials include ceramic tile, wood, stone, stone veneer, brick, and corrugated and/or rolled metal.
- 3.8.4 Employ materials of good quality and durability, particularly on the ground floor, for ease of maintenance and to enhance the appeal of the public realm. Whenever possible, use natural and local materials. Recommended primary materials include stucco, cement plaster, precast concrete, poured-in-place concrete, and concrete blocks.
- 3.8.5 Allow stucco-like finishes, provided the stucco finish is smooth, such as a smooth trowel or fine sand float finish, or dash, rather than textured, lace, or rough sand finish.
- 3.8.6 Construct residential building veneers using wood, brick, or stone.
- 3.8.7 Awnings and canopies should be constructed of flexible materials such as canvas or reinforced plastic and may be translucent or opaque; translucent awnings may be illuminated from within.
- 3.8.8 Reflective and frosted glass should not be permitted.

## **3.9 LIGHTING**

The lighting of outdoor areas, such as streets, walkways, parking lots, and common open spaces is essential to improve the nighttime environment for safe and enjoyable use. Good outdoor lighting can also conserve energy and resources, protect the environment from adverse effects of night lighting, and enhance community character. Therefore, outdoor lighting should be carefully designed with regard to placement, intensity, timing, duration, and color.

- 3.9.1 Provide pedestrian-scale lighting at building entryways, bicycle parking areas, seating areas, transit stops, surface parking areas, common open space areas, and pedestrian paths. The type, style, and intensity of lighting should reflect the use and character of the area.
- 3.9.2 Illuminate changes in grade, path intersections, and other areas along paths which, if left unlit, would cause the user to feel insecure. Recommended minimum levels of illumination along pedestrian paths

between destinations is 0.5 foot-candle. At pedestrian destination points such as entryways, plazas, and courtyards, lighting levels should typically achieve illumination of 1 foot-candle.

- 3.9.3 Lighting at display windows and entrances should be broad spectrum and concealed from direct view. No rotating, blinking, animated, colored, or flashing lights should be permitted.
- 3.9.4 All exterior site lighting (i.e., rear yard or signs) should be directed inward and downward so as not to disturb adjacent uses. In particular, outdoor lighting adjacent to residential areas should be shielded and directed away from the surrounding residential use.
- 3.9.5 Lighting levels shall be adequate for safety while minimizing light spillage and glare to minimize light pollution and preserve views of the night sky. Lighting level standards should be consistent with City safety and illumination requirements.
- 3.9.6 Outdoor light fixtures must be compatible with the style and period of the building and not obscure or conflict with significant architectural details of the building. Overhead and exposed wiring and conduit for outdoor lighting is not permitted.
- 3.9.7 Provide street lights on both sides of all public streets at intervals no greater than 120 feet on center. All street light fixtures, including hybrid fixtures with both street and pedestrian lights, shall be located within the landscape parkway of the amenity zone adjacent to the street curb.
- 3.9.8 Use many short low-intensity fixtures (i.e., bollards or fixtures mounted on short posts or low walls) over fewer tall fixtures that illuminate large areas to reduce light pollution.
- 3.9.9 For commercial parking areas, mount overhead lighting at a maximum height of 20 feet, with a lower height preferred.
- 3.9.10 For residential parking areas, mount overhead lighting at a maximum height of 15 feet, with a lower height preferred; lighting in residential parking areas should also avoid interference with bedroom windows.
- 3.9.11 Limit overhead fixtures for high-activity pedestrian areas to 10 feet in height and space at distances no greater than 50 feet apart (where no additional light source in between exists).
- 3.9.12 Coverings should be shatterproof.
- 3.9.13 Locate lighting posts to avoid hazards for pedestrians or vehicles.
- 3.9.14 All light sources shall provide a warm light and should utilize energy-efficient technology such as low-voltage fixtures and energy-efficient bulbs. The use of solar-powered lighting is encouraged.
- 3.9.15 A family of fixture styles shall be chosen for all streets within the Specific Plan area to create a consistent and cohesive identity along the Corridor [insert images of suggested styles for lighting].
- 3.9.16 Light fixtures shall be made of materials that have long life spans and are able to withstand constant use and exposure to the elements.

## **3.10 HARDSCAPE**

Hardscape elements are intended to provide comfort, ensure safety, enhance visual aesthetics, ground plane aesthetic, break up the ground plane from continuous surface types, and define space.

- 3.10.1 Sidewalk pavement shall be designed in compliance with the following standards; paving materials shall be simple, functional, and long-lasting. Except where designated as enhanced paving, sidewalks in the public right-of-way shall be made of a single standard concrete mix so as to provide a uniform appearance throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- 3.10.2 Crosswalk paving shall be enhanced to distinguish it from the surrounding road. It shall be of a material that will not present difficulties to people with decreased mobility and shall meet the safety criteria established by the City of San Diego.
- 3.10.3 A simple, uniform score joint pattern that is coordinated with the location of tree grates, light poles, building entries and other design elements shall be established for the entirety of the Specific Plan Area to provide a cohesive appearance.
- 3.10.4 Paving shall not have beveled edges or other features that can cause excessive bouncing for carts, strollers, and wheelchairs.

### **3.11 CORNER TREATMENT**

The corners of buildings on major intersections can be treated to enhance the visual character and interest of the environment.

- 3.11.1 Design corner treatments to create a sense of arrival with appropriate use of streetscape elements such as landscaping, street furniture, lighting, special paving, and signage; corner treatments should be consistent and cohesive with the adjacent building and streets.
- 3.11.2 Buildings in corner treatment areas may be recessed back from the frontage zone to create corner plazas or entry courts for use as a prominent entryway, gathering place, and/or outdoor dining. Corner plazas and entry courts should be appropriate in scale and designed with public amenities.
- 3.11.3 Include prominent architectural features and mass articulation such as prominent entries or corner towers for buildings located in corner treatment areas.
- 3.11.4 No structure or landscaping should be placed in a corner treatment area in a manner that obstructs a clear view of traffic.

### **3.12 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING DESIGN**

This Specific Plan incorporates environmental sustainability in various aspects of Morena Corridor to provide an environmentally responsible environment while contributing to long-term community revitalization and economic value. The following standards and guidelines are provided here to emphasize the incorporation of sustainable development practices and best management practices in an effort to prioritize sustainability.

- 3.12.1 Consider solar influences, energy efficiency, and prevailing breezes in site design; orient buildings towards the sun when possible to provide natural heating and day lighting, and building openings and outdoor living spaces should be oriented to take advantage of the prevailing west to east direction of breeze flow in the project area.
- 3.12.2 Incorporate natural cooling and passive solar heating systems in new development. These may include extended eaves, window overhangs, light colored “cool” roofs, awnings and tree placement for natural cooling, operable windows, and building and window orientation to take advantage of passive solar heating.

- 3.12.3 Whenever possible, building articulation and form should be expressive of and driven by environmental and site conditions such as solar orientation, views, noise, prevailing winds, and local climate.
- 3.12.4 Encourage floor plans that employ features such as courtyards, plazas, and patios to provide shading and air circulation and operable windows on all sides of the building.
- 3.12.5 Encourage new public and private development to incorporate sustainable design features such as solar panels, light shelves, overhangs, light-colored rooftop materials, grey water systems, and other features to reduce energy consumption. Parking shade structures are particularly good locations for the installation of solar panels.
- 3.12.6 Energy efficiency, achieved through building design or orientation, materials, window overhangs, arcades or loggia, solar hot water heating, proper placement of shade trees, advanced heating and cooling systems, or other conservation measures, is encouraged.
- 3.12.7 Encourage trees, landscaping, and sun screens on west and south exterior building walls to reduce energy use.
- 3.12.8 Design sites to be water efficient by utilizing native and/or drought tolerant trees and plants, installing water-efficient irrigation systems and devices (e.g., soil moisture based irrigation controls), and the use of permeable surfaces to retain storm water runoff on-site.
- 3.12.9 Incorporate green or sustainable building materials in new buildings, including recycled content materials that are consistent with the underlying architectural systems and character of the building.
- 3.12.10 Reuse and recycle construction and demolition waste, including, but not limited to, soil, vegetation, concrete, lumber, metal, and cardboard.
- 3.12.11 Provide interior and exterior storage areas in new development for recyclables and green waste and adequate recycling containers located in public areas.
- 3.12.12 Incorporate LEED low emission and electric vehicle charging stations in parking lots/garages in new public and private development.

## 4.0 SPECIAL TREATMENTS – Gateways and Intersections

Key intersections and gateways require greater attention to detail due to its prominent location and sensitive relationship to the public realm. Special attention to the treatment of buildings and the public realm at key locations can greatly enhance the character of the area and establish a unique sense of identity. Key locations within the Morena Corridor will be identified as gateways and corner treatments.

- 4.1 Orient and design buildings located at key gateways and intersections to emphasize the corner as a node of activity and architectural prominence. Solutions for developing projects that are of an exemplary quality at gateways or prominent intersections include:
  - Tower elements as a prominent massing feature
  - Entry plazas on corner sites
  - Fountains or water features
  - Distinct changes in the building volume at the primary entry
  - Prominent landscape features, such as tall trees

- Unique building lighting for nighttime effect
- Public art installations that reinforce a theme reflective of Morena

4.2 Buildings should serve as an iconic representation of its district's character.

4.3 Trademark buildings may be prohibited if they are not consistent with other design principles established in these guidelines.