



FOSTER CITY Single Family Objective Design Standards

PC Study Session #2

4/17/2025



Components of Single-Family Home Design

- **Site Design**
 - Entry Location and street Connectivity (Orientation)
 - Curb cuts and driveways
- **Building Design**
 - Building Massing (Solar Impacts)
 - Articulation (to create visual interest)
 - Materials and Colors
 - Roof Forms
 - Garages
 - Principal entry
 - Balconies
 - Windows and Doors
 - Gutters, downspouts, and flashings
 - Interior layout (not part of objective standards)
- **Accessory Structures**
 - Location and setbacks
 - Coverage
 - Height
 - Materials
- **Misc**
 - Placement of Mechanical Equipment (e.g., air conditioning units)
 - Yards
 - Landscaping and Lighting
 - Fences



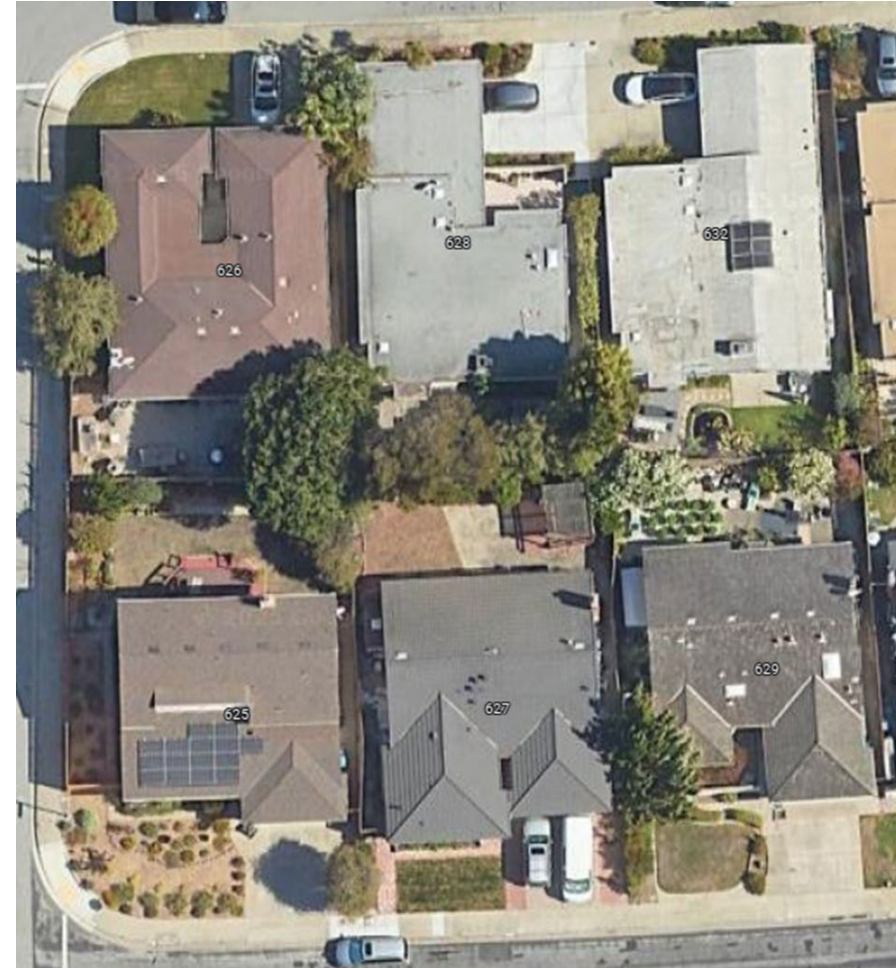
Study Session Topics

- April 17, 2025
 - Site Design
 - Building Design
 - Accessory Structures
- June 5, 2025 (Tentative)
 - Yards
 - Landscaping and Lighting
 - Fences
 - Waterfront Properties
 - Eichler Design
- September 4, 2025 (Tentative)
 - Architectural Review Process
 - Amendments to Municipal Code



Site Design

- Entry location and street connectivity
- Curb cuts and driveways
 - Street facing garage
 - Side entry garage



Entry Location and Street Connectivity



Proposed Standards:

- The principal entry for all new primary units shall be one of the following:
 - Located and oriented to face the public or private street.
 - Located inside an entry courtyard with the entrance to the entry courtyard facing the public or private street.
 - Located on the side of the primary unit provided that the required side setback from the front setback line to such entrance, shall not be less than ten feet.
- On corner lots, the principal entry may be oriented toward either street.
- The design of the principal entry shall be in conformance with Section XX.
- A walkway measuring a minimum of 36 inches in width shall be provided from the driveway or sidewalk to the primary entrance. (accessible for wheelchairs)

Entry Location - Courtyards

Proposed Standard:

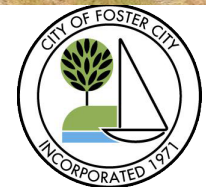
The principal entry for all new primary units shall be located and oriented to face the public or private street.

Should the definition of “principal entry” include the entry to the front courtyard if there is a wall or gate of at least 5’ in height enclosing a courtyard between the house and the street?

Should the front door in a courtyard still be required to be oriented to the street?

Should new units be allowed to have a courtyard entry?

Should new units be allowed to have a side-facing entry (on non-corner lots)?



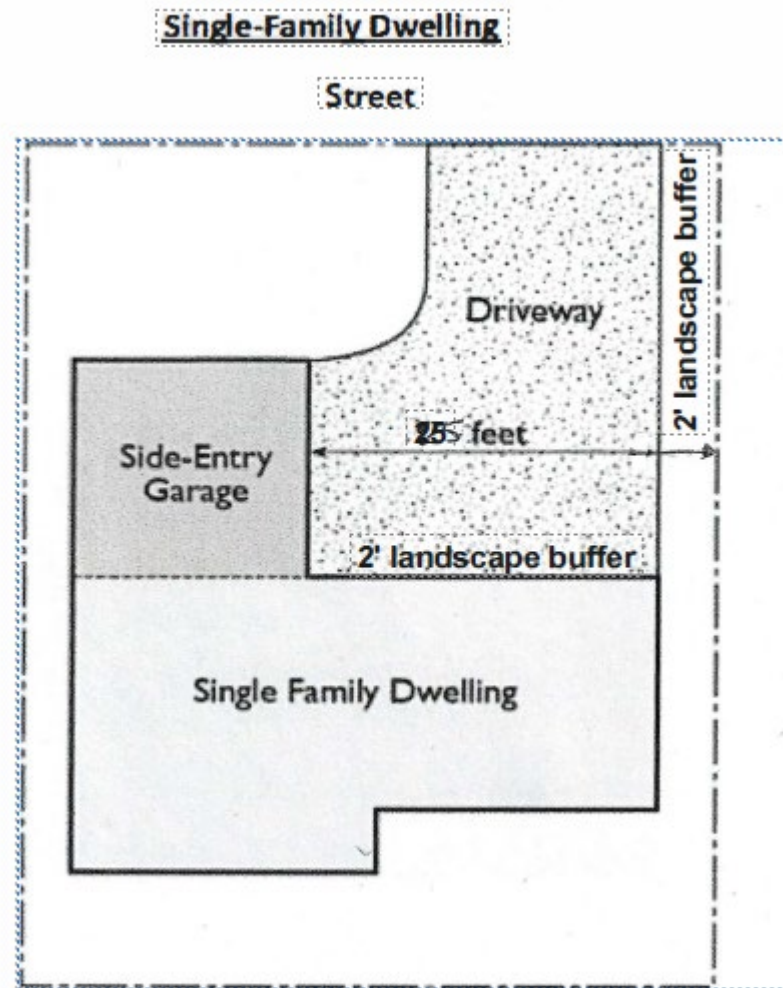
Street Facing Garage Driveways



Proposed Standards:

- Driveways shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet deep, measured from the property line parallel to the public or private street, and a maximum of twenty (20) feet wide.
- Driveways on corner lots shall be located at least twenty (20) feet from the property lines at the intersection of the corner or pedestrian crosswalk.
- Driveways abutting a side property line shall include a minimum two (2) foot wide landscape area.

Side Entry Garage Driveways



Proposed Standards:

- A minimum distance of twenty-five (25) feet shall be required, measured from the face of the garage entrance to the side property line.
- A landscape buffer a minimum of two (2) feet in depth shall be provided between the driveway and the primary building.
- A turning radius of at least twenty-five feet shall be required for any garage where the access does not directly face the street.

Should a two (2) foot landscape buffer shall be provided between the driveway and the primary building?

Shared Driveways

Proposed Standards:

- Shared driveways between two (2) properties shall provide a distance of fifty-two (52) feet between the faces of garage doors facing each other and **provide reciprocal easements** to ensure shared access. Other configurations for driveways shared between two (2) properties shall be as approved by the City Engineer.
- If there is a shared driveway between the two (2) properties, and one (1) of the property owners wishes to separate the driveway, the property owner shall ensure that both the driveways, upon separation, meet the requirements of this Chapter.



Building Design

- Building Massing (overall size)
- Articulation (to create visual interest)
- Materials and Colors
- Roof Forms
- Garages
- Principal entry
- Balconies
- Windows and Doors
- Gutters, downspouts, and flashings



Building Massing

Proposed Solar Impact Standards from Policy 1-2000:

Room additions shall conform with the following:

- It does not eliminate all direct sunlight to any living/family room, dining room, or kitchen in an adjacent house.
- It does not reduce more than 2 hours of direct sunlight to a living/family room or kitchen, or if it reduces more than 4 hours of direct sunlight to a bedroom in an adjacent house.
- It does not reduce the amount of time that an adjacent house's window receives direct sunlight by more than 50% at any season where an impact occurs (requires a comparison of the hours that a window receives direct sunlight in an existing and proposed condition).
- If a living/family room, dining room, or kitchen in the adjacent house has more than one window, the solar impact will be based on the aggregate impact.

"High-Use" Rooms/Spaces	"Low-Use" Rooms/Spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Living rooms• Dining rooms• Family rooms• Kitchens• Rear Yards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bedrooms• Bathrooms/Dressing rooms• Entrances/Hallways/Stairwells• Pantries and Closets• Garages/workshops• Side Yards (less than ten [10] feet in width or yard areas with little recreational value)



Should the solar impact policy standards be included in the Municipal Code as objective standards? With changes? Compliance with the standards would be a ministerial process and deviation from the standards would require Planning Commission review. Should a height limit be included for when a solar study is required?

Front Elevation Articulation



Proposed Standards:

The front elevation shall include a principal entry in conformance with Section XX and at least two (2) of the following treatments:

- Change in color and/or material
- Window
- Change in wall plane of a minimum of four (4) feet
- Attached trellis or pergola

Should the front elevation articulation be required to utilize a minimum of 1 or 2 of the listed treatments?

Rear Elevation Articulation



Proposed Standards:

No rear elevation shall run in a continuous plane of more than twenty (20) feet on any specific story without at least (1) of the following treatments:

- i. Change in color and/or material
- ii. Window
- iii. Entry door
- iv. Patio, deck, or balcony
- v. Attached trellis or pergola
- vi. Recess or projection of at least two (2) feet in depth and four (4) feet in width

Should no rear elevation articulation run in a continuous plane of more than twenty (20) feet on any specific story without at least (1) of the specified treatments?

Materials and Colors

Proposed Standards:

- i. Materials used for all elements of building exteriors (excluding roofs) shall be limited to three (3) different materials.
- ii. The applicant shall refer to the list of prohibited materials established by the Community Development Department from use on building exteriors. The list may be amended from time to time to accommodate new materials and colors.

Color. Primary elevation walls and garage doors are prohibited from using primary colors and secondary primary colors on all elevations. Accent features and trim are exempt.



Roof Form – with Articulation

Roof Form Articulation refers to detailing in shape and structure of a roof to add visual interest and reduce bulk or monotony.

Proposed Standards:

Roof surfaces that face a public or private street and are wider than 30 feet shall be vertically articulated at least once every 30 feet on at least one of the stories with at least one of the following techniques:

- i. A change in height of at least four (4) feet.
- ii. A roof dormer
- iii. A change in roof orientation
- iv. A change in roof form that projects at least two (2) feet above the main roofline.
- v. Openings in the roof, such as openings with exposed rafters.



Roof Forms – Without Articulation



Proposed Standards:

Roof surfaces on new houses that face a public or private street and are wider than 30 feet shall be vertically articulated at least once every 30 feet on at least one of the stories.

Is this requirement too difficult for the smaller lots in Foster City?

Roof Forms – Pitch and Materials

Roof Pitch is a measure of how steep a roof is.

It is usually expressed as a ratio of vertical rise over horizontal run. Example: a 4:12 pitch means a roof rises 4 inches for every 12 inches.

Proposed Standards:

Roof pitch shall be consistent on all pitched roof sections.

Should there be an allowance for small deviations in roof pitch?

The roof material on a single structure should match on all sides.

Should the City allow the roof material for an addition to be different than the existing roof material in any circumstances?



Garage Frontage

Proposed Standards:

Where a garage is located facing the front yard and the lot width is sixty (60) feet or less, the garage frontage including the door width and space between multiple doors shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the width of the front façade of the building. For lots wider than sixty (60) feet, the garage facade including the door shall not exceed forty (40) percent of the front facade of the building.

Should the percentage of the front façade taken up by the garage door be limited? If so, is fifty (50) percent appropriate? This will force most 3-car garages to be side entry (e.g. Alden Park).

36% of 55'



50% of 50'



Garage Articulation

Proposed Standards:

- i. Garages shall incorporate either a recess of at least twelve (12) inches from the surrounding wall plane or an overhang at least twelve (12) inches deep.
- ii. Side entry garages shall incorporate at least one of the following along the street frontage:
 - Landscaping with a mature height of at least twenty-four (24) inches.
 - Windows.
 - Decorative trellis.

Should articulation be required for the street-facing wall of side entry garages?

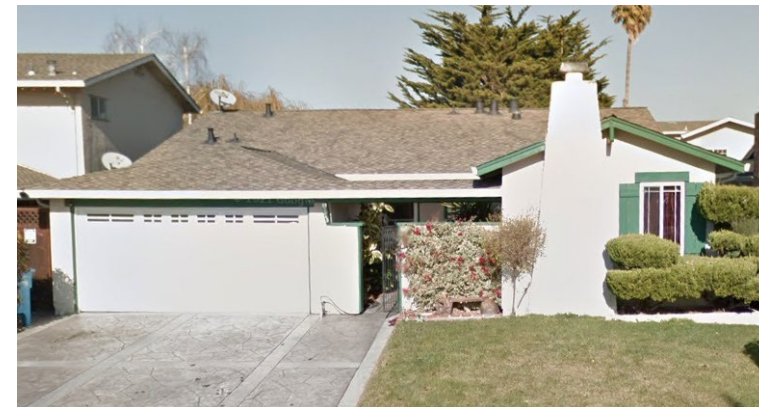


Principal Entry

Proposed Standards:

Principal entries shall be defined by at least one of the following elements:

- i. Articulated with a roof form that projects from the front elevation at least three (3) feet.
- ii. A covered porch with a minimum three (3) foot depth and four (4) foot width.
- iii. Recessed entry of at least three (3) feet in depth and four (4) feet in width that creates a covered landing area.
- iv. An entry to a landscaped courtyard leading to the primary entrance that is enclosed with walls, fences, or gates at least five (5) feet in height.



Principal Entry



No porch or recessed entry



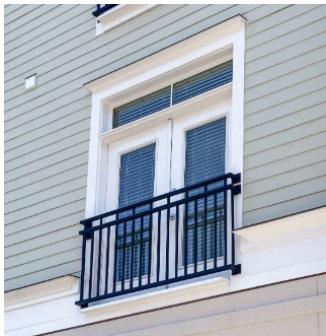
Entry courtyard limits visibility

Balconies

Proposed Standards:

Balconies shall not be located on any elevation facing a side yard unless there is a separation from the edge of the balcony to the nearest wall plane of the adjacent home of not less than twenty (25) feet.

Projecting balconies located on rear elevations shall not be closer than fifteen (15) feet to the property line which it faces.



Should Juliette balconies be allowed on any side elevation or only allowed if there's a minimum setback of 25' to adjacent house?

Is there a need to establish a minimum size for balconies?



Windows

Proposed Standards:

On the front elevation and street side elevation of all homes, all windows shall match in terms of color and materials, window type and style.

Should the requirement for the use of grids and style (e.g., slider vs casement vs double-hung) to match apply to all windows on a given elevation?

Or only the front and street-facing sides?



Windows

Proposed Standards:

On side (not street facing) and rear elevations, windows shall match in terms of color and materials but may vary with respect to the use of grids and style.

Should the requirement for the use of grids and style (e.g., slider vs casement vs double-hung) to match apply to all windows on a given elevation?

Or only the front and street-facing sides?



Window Articulation

Proposed Standards:

i. Windows located on the front elevation facing the street shall be articulated with at least one of the following details:

- 1) Frames or trims. Window frames or trim shall fully wrap the perimeter of the window and be a minimum of two (2) inches in width. Segments of window frames around the perimeter may vary in width to match the architectural style of the home.
- 2) Sills. Windowsills shall project out from the wall plane a minimum of one (1) inch.
- 3) Shutters. Shutters shall be sized to cover one hundred (100) to one hundred fifty (150) percent of the window and match the exact window shape.
- 4) Recess of at least two (2) inches.

Should there be requirements for front and street-side elevation window articulation?



Accessory Structures: Applicability

Proposed Standards:

This section shall apply to structures that are six (6) feet or taller in height, including but not limited to garages, carports, sheds, workshops, gazebos, trellises, and covered patios, that are detached from and accessory to the main building on the site and decks that are over eighteen inches in height.

A detached accessory building may only be constructed on a lot on which there is a permitted main building to which the accessory building is related or on an adjacent lot under the same ownership.

Should there be separate regulations for play structures? Retain exemption for play structures up to a maximum height of eight (8) feet?

Should all detached accessory structures less than six (6') in height be exempt?

Should this be changed to seven (7) feet because fences are allowed to be six (6) feet plus one (1) foot of lattice?

Should the 15' exemption for flag poles remain? Should taller flag poles be exempt?



Accessory Structures: Location

Proposed Standard:

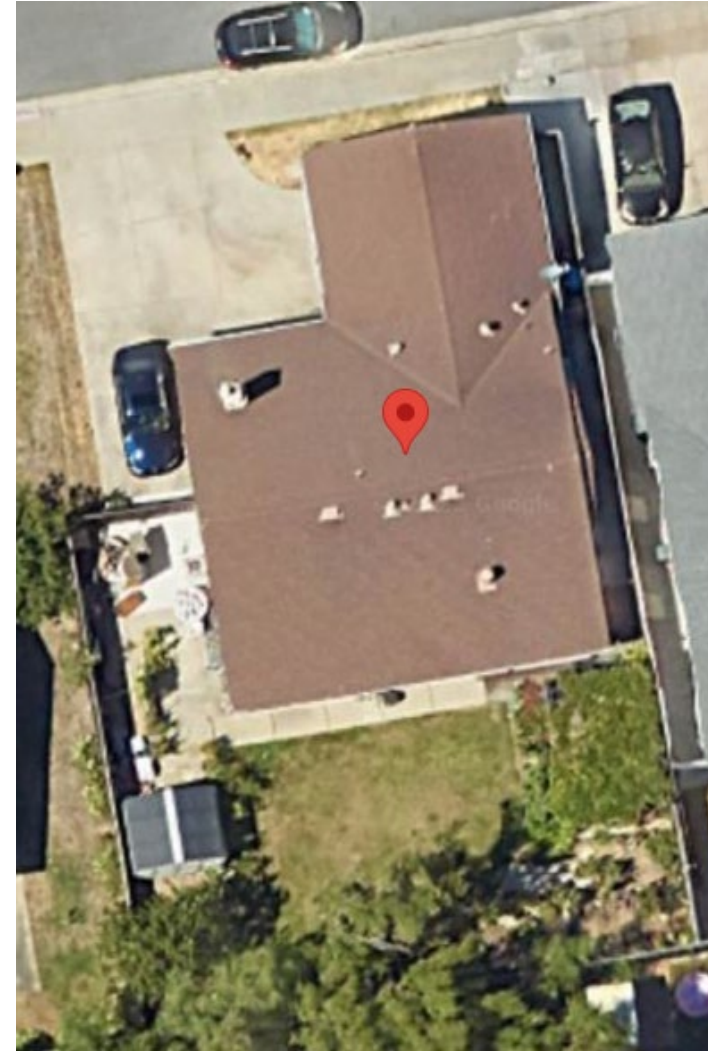
Accessory structures that are six (6) feet or taller in height shall be located in the rear half of the lot.

Should this existing requirement limiting all detached accessory structures that are six (6) feet or taller to the rear half of the lot be changed?

Should the accessory structures that are seven (7) feet in height be exempt if they are five (5) feet from the property line since one (1) foot of lattice is allowed on top of a six (6) foot fence?

Should a detached arbor/trellis be allowed in the front yard?

How should temporary structures like pop-up canopies be addressed? Should they be prohibited in the front yard?



Accessory Structures: Setbacks to Property Lines

Proposed Standard:

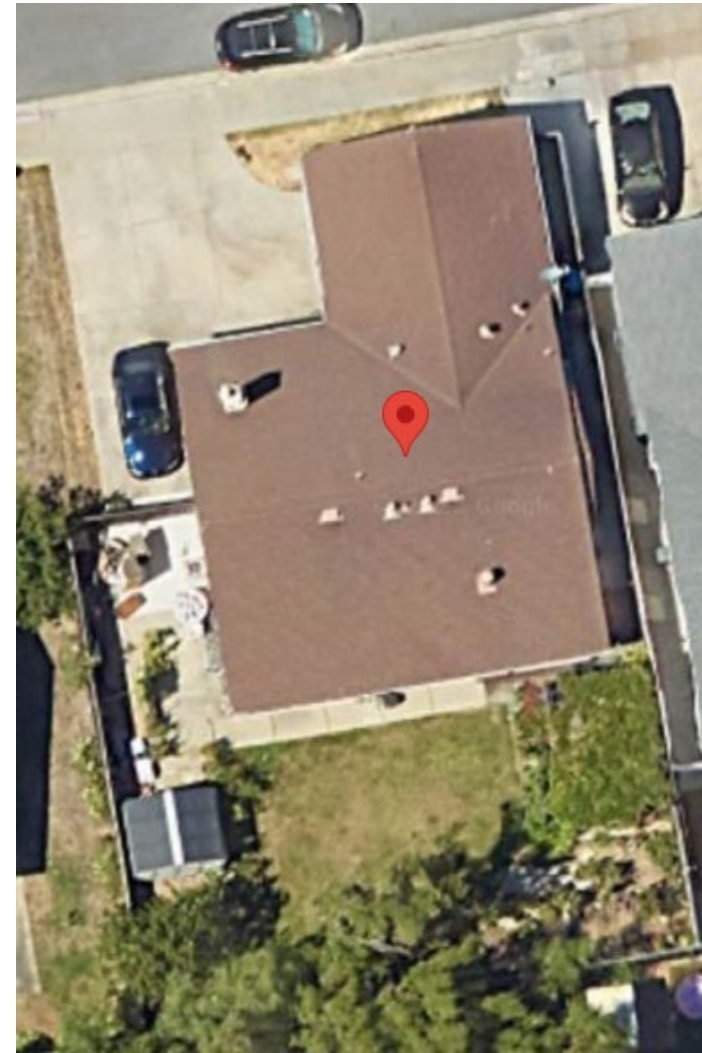
Accessory structures taller than six (6) feet in height shall be set back:

- i. A minimum of four (4) feet from any rear or non-street side property line.
- ii. A minimum of ten (10) feet from a street side property line.
- lii. A minimum of five (5) feet from the primary dwelling.
- iv. Accessory structures more than 120 square feet and/or including plumbing and/or wood burning appliances in size shall conform to any building code requirements.

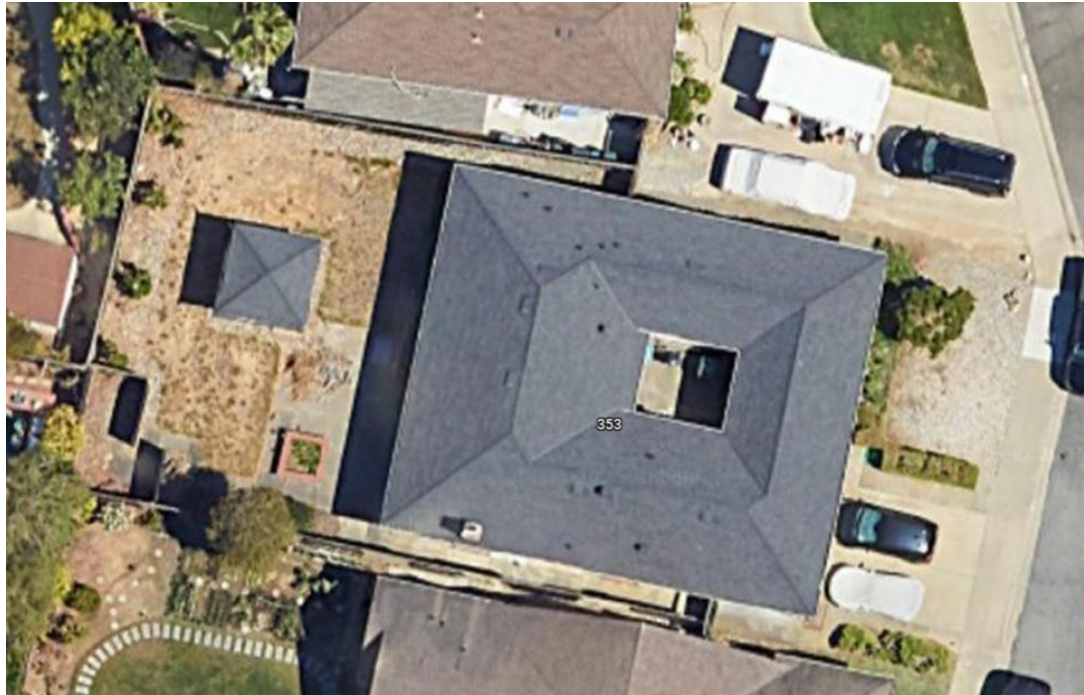
The existing requirement for a 5' setback to the side and rear property lines is difficult on many lots.

Should the setback be reduced to the side and rear property lines from 5' to 4'?

Leave them excluded from street side setback?



Accessory Structures: Setback to Main Structure



The existing requirement for a 10' setback to the dwelling is difficult on many lots.

Proposed Standard:

Setback is five (5) feet to the primary dwelling.

Should the setback be reduced between the accessory structure taller than six (6) feet and the primary dwelling from 10' to 5'?

Accessory Structures: Coverage

Proposed Standards:

Detached accessory structures taller than the six (6) feet shall be included in calculating the maximum building coverage allowed on the lot.

Maximum lot coverage is fifty (50) percent.

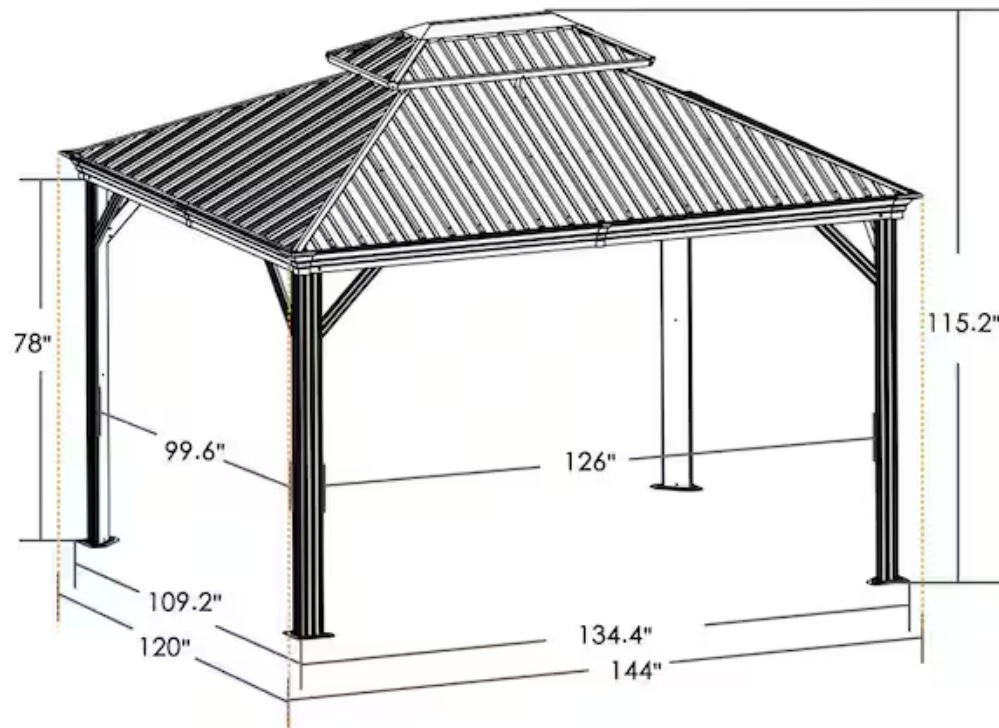
Maximum rear yard coverage is thirty (30) percent.

Is a separate accessory structure coverage limit for the rear yard needed in addition to the 50% lot coverage limit?



Accessory Structures: Height

10' X 12' DIMENSIONS



ASGL limits gazebos to nine (9) feet in height with an additional 12 inches permitted for trim.

Some cities allow height of 9' to plate and 12-16' overall height.

Proposed Standard:

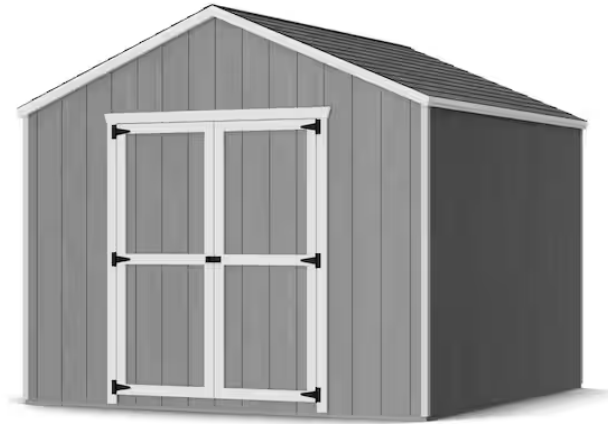
The maximum allowable height of accessory structures is ten (10) feet.

Should the maximum height of 9 feet plus 12 inches for trim be increased to 10 feet?

Accessory Structures: Materials



plastic



wood



metal

ASGL requires high quality, natural materials and to duplicate the colors, materials and detailing of the existing home.

Current requirements for high quality, natural materials and to duplicate colors and materials of the house preclude the use of many pre-fab or kits available.

Should more materials be allowed so that people can use "store-bought" sheds, etc.?

Are there any materials that should not be allowed?

Accessory Structures: Decks and patios



Proposed Standards:

Decks and patios that are raised eighteen (18) inches and higher shall maintain a minimum setback of twenty-four (24) inches from perimeter fencing/walls to allow a landscaped area for a privacy screen. Decks and patios that are raised three (3) feet and higher shall require a minimum five (5) foot setback.

Decks and patios taller than twelve (12) inches from grade shall provide skirting to screen off-site views of the underside of the structure unless located within a yard fully enclosed by a fence at least six (6) feet in height.

Decks and patios shall have a vertical rise of no more than eighteen (18) inches within any horizontal distance of six (6) feet.

Should the limitation of a vertical rise of eighteen (18) inches within a horizontal distance of six feet only apply to waterfront decks?