

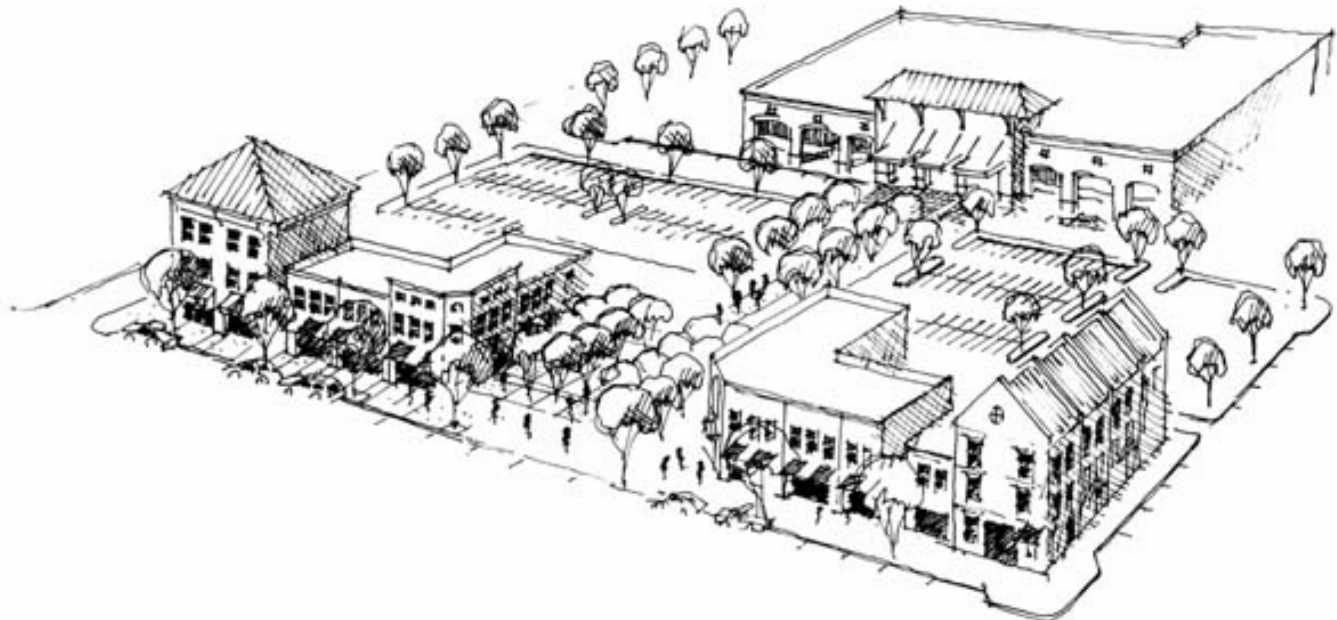
*WORKING DRAFT MARCH 21, 2005*

# **RAISING THE DESIGN STANDARDS IN AUSTIN, TX**

**Proposed Code Amendments to Improve Commercial Design**

**Prepared by Councilmember Brewster McCracken's Task Force**

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## BACKGROUND

### City Council Resolution

On February 26, 2004 City Council, in response to the findings that the City of Austin has among the lowest design standards of communities in the Central Texas region, directed the City Manager by resolution (#040226-27) "...to prepare recommendations for citywide design standards for commercial and retail development. These recommended citywide design standards shall constitute the best practices of the standards adopted by communities around the nation and shall require design standards that reflect Austin's unique historic, landscape and architectural character..." The Council resolution specifically asked for standards for commercial development related to:

- Landscaping
- Building façade materials
- Use of windows
- Façade articulation
- Lighting
- Convertibility
- Design modularity
- Development orientation
- Transit and pedestrian amenities
- Public spaces
- Neighborhood access
- Parking
- Signage
- Screening of loading, mechanical equipment, storage and trash

### Task Force Research

The Task Force, organized by Councilmember Brewster McCracken, met over several months to consider research and input from the public, various stakeholder groups and individuals. The Task Force consisted of Mayor Pro-Tem Jackie Goodman, Councilmember Raul Alvarez, Councilmember Brewster McCracken, (and their aides), Design Commissioners Girard Kinney and Richard Weiss and Planning Commissioners Chris Riley and Matthew Moore. City staff participated in Task Force meetings as well. The Task Force sought to understand the preferences of citizens and the regulations of other cities prior to developing a recommendation, by reviewing the following:

- Results of the web-based survey of Austin residents and visitors conducted between March 12, 2004 and April 16, 2004. There was a record-setting 5,469 respondents.
- Development requirements in other US cities.
- Interviews of planners in other communities with design regulations.
- Input from individual members of the Austin real estate community.
- Input from public meetings with open Stakeholder group consisting of design and real estate professionals and neighborhood and environmental activists.
- Findings by Robert Gibbs, national retail design expert, and the input from work sessions he led with the stakeholder group.

## PROPOSAL

### Structure

The intent of these new regulations is to create a built environment of aesthetic and sustainable value that enhances economic development efforts to promote Austin's unique character and natural environment and that upholds an efficient development review process.

The proposed new regulatory system will raise standards for all non-residential and mixed-use development, but within a regulatory structure offering options and flexibility, not strict requirements. **New commercial development will be subject to a set of minimum site and building design standards, recognizing that all new development, regardless of size, should be subject to minimum standards** (See Applicability section below for when proposed minimum requirements would be triggered).

The major change in this proposal is in how development will be regulated. **Certain development regulations (such as development orientation, signage and landscaping) will be tied to the development parcel's roadway frontage(s)**, recognizing both that the roadway provides access to the site and to the urban design framework. The Applicability section below indicates which amendments apply to which roadway types. The Roadway types proposed are:

- i. Transit Roadways (roadways to be determined)
- ii. Neighborhood Roadways (roadways not considered Transit, Highway or Hill Country).
- iii. Highways (see map page 4)
- iv. Hill Country Roadways (see map page 5)

### Applicability

Not all site plan and building plan permits must comply with the proposed code amendments. The table on page 6 summarizes when a development must comply with a proposed code amendment. In all cases, any regulation from the Neighborhood Plan Combining District (NPCD), Neighborhood Conservation Combining District (NCCD), Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and all zoning overlays supersede these proposed code amendments to the extent of conflict. **Specifically, compatibility standards and neighborhood plans supersede these proposed code amendments to the extent of conflict.** In addition, the current Code requirements apply where the proposed code amendments do not change the current requirements.

Currently the code does not specifically define what a redevelopment project is, but instead states for certain regulations, such as for water quality in LDC Section 25-8-26, at what point a project triggers compliance.

## Summary of Proposed Code Amendments

PCA #	Brief Description	Applicability	Trigger	Roadways	Page #
<b>Development Orientation</b>					7
DO-1	Revise site development regulations	All non-residential zoning districts.	All new buildings, except additions to existing buildings.	All	8
DO-2	Limit parking in front yard	All non-residential zoning districts. Land use exemption list applies. <sup>1</sup>	""	Transit and Neighborhood Roadways	9
DO-3	Orient buildings according to roadway type hierarchy	""	""	All	10
DO-4	Exception to maximum front setback to protect natural features or historically-significant resources.	""	""	Transit and Neighborhood Roadways	10
DO-5	Allow exception to front yard parking limitation	Exception allowed for any use subject to limitation	""	Neighborhood Roadways	12
<b>Connectivity</b>					13
C-1	Create street-like internal circulation system on large sites.	All non-residential zoning districts. Land use exemption list applies. <sup>2</sup>	Projects that require site plans, except additions.	All	13
C-2	Options to improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connectivity.	""	""	All, with exceptions for Transit and Neighborhood Roadways.	16
<b>Parking</b>					18
P-1	Options to mitigate excess parking.	All non-residential zoning districts.	When parking requirement triggered (25-6-471).	All	18
P-2	Allow reduction of minimum parking requirements	""	""	All	20
P-3	Allow on-street parking to be constructed in public ROW and count towards minimum required parking.	""	""	All	20

<sup>1</sup> A land use exemption list will list specific land uses not subject to the proposed code amendment. This list will be developed later after receiving input from the public and city staff.

PCA #	Brief Description	Applicability	Trigger	Roadways	Page #
	<b>Landscape</b>				22
L-1	Revise general city-wide landscape requirements.	All non-residential land uses.	When landscaping requirement triggered (25-2-981).	All	22
L-2	Require new Transit and Neighborhood Roadway landscape standards.	""	""	Transit and Neighborhood	24
L-3	Require new Highway landscape standards.	""	""	Highway	25
L-4	Require new Hill Country landscape standards.	""	""	Hill Country	25
	<b>Land Use</b>				26
LU-1	Provide pedestrian service with drive-in services	All drive-in services	New drive-in services	All	26
LU-2	Options to mitigate undesirable features of service stations.	All new service stations.	New	All	26
LU-3	New Vertical Mixed Use zoning option within MU zoning.	All MU combining district zoning	New site plans.	All	27
LU-4	Provide amenity on large site	All non-residential zoning.	New site plans.	All	28
LU-5	Options to promote development of better places	All non-residential zoning.	New site plans.	All	28
	<b>Exterior Lighting</b>				29
EL-1	Use fully-shielded and full cut off light fixtures for certain exterior lighting applications.	All non-residential uses and lighting in public ROW.	Projects that require site plans and building permits.	All	29
	<b>Signs</b>				32
S-1	Add new sign definitions.	Current applicability requirements in sign ordinance	Current trigger requirements in sign ordinance	All	32
S-2	Revise city-wide sign regulations.	""	""	All	33
S-3	Revise sign districts, areas and heights.	""	""	All	35
S-4	Provide visible street address numbers.	""	""	All	37
	<b>Screening &amp; Compatibility</b>				38
SC-1	Screen equipment and utilities.	All non-residential zoning districts.	Projects that require site plans.	All	38

PCA #	Brief Description	Applicability	Trigger	Roadways	Page #
<b>Stormwater Management</b>					39
<b>SM-1</b>	Construct attractive stormwater facilities.	All new stormwater facilities.	Subdivision and site plan.	All	39
<b>Building Design</b>					40
<b>BD-1</b>	Restrict certain building materials	All non-residential zoning districts. Land use exemption list applies.	New building plans.	All	40
<b>BD-2</b>	Provide glazing on building facades	All commercial zoning and VMU zoning. Applies to any buildings zoned for industrial use or warehouse use at the point their use is converted to commercial or office.	New building plans.	All	40
<b>BD-3</b>	Delete requirement for annual license fee for pedestrian cover in ROW	All non-residential zoning districts. Land use exemption list applies.	All construction, including remodels.	All	42
<b>BD-4</b>	Requirements for single story buildings larger than 100,00 square feet.	All non-residential zoning districts. Land use exemption list applies.	New building plans.	All	43
<b>BD-5</b>	Options to improve building design.	All commercial zoning and VMU zoning. Applies to any buildings zoned for industrial use or warehouse use at the point their use is converted to commercial or office.	Projects that require site plans, except additions.	All	44



## DEVELOPMENT ORIENTATION

### Key Issues

Orientation refers to where buildings sit on a site as well as where their principal entrances or “storefronts” are located. Currently in Austin’s code, regulations related to orientation, such as building setbacks, depend solely on the property’s zoning. While this approach is common throughout the US, there are three key problems with it:

- The building setbacks and other site development regulations are the same for each property within the same zoning district regardless of where the property is located and what kind of roadway provides its principal access. For example, a property located on a two-lane neighborhood collector street with GR zoning has the same setback and height requirements as a property with GR zoning on a major highway. The desired orientation of a commercial development depends primarily on what roadway it is on and what area of town it is in, but the current code does not consider these differences.
- Linking site development regulations solely by base zoning district results in zoning for site regulations, instead of zoning for land uses. For instance, it is not uncommon for an applicant to request CS zoning for the site development regulations, but only wanting GR uses.
- Along a single stretch of roadway, there are often a variety of zoning districts, each with different site development regulations. Currently, there could be three adjacent parcels on the same roadway with the same land use but with three different setback, height, impervious cover and FAR requirements.

In addition, survey results showed that a strong majority (70.5%), including the majority of real estate professionals, want to see a change in development orientation along non-highway roadways (Urban Roadways) so that buildings are built close to the street. In addition, cities around the US, including San Antonio, TX, Dallas, TX, San Diego, CA, Milwaukee, WI, Sarasota, FL and Portland, OR are now requiring buildings close to the street along certain roadways or within non-downtown zoning districts.

## Proposed Code Amendments

Some optional items contain ongoing obligations. To ensure ongoing compliance, all site plans shall list the obligations for the site, and all site plans shall be filed with the county clerk.

<b>DO-1</b>	<b>Revise site development regulations.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts. All new buildings, except additions to existing buildings.	

To improve the responsiveness of zoning to location, to remove the inconsistency of having different regulations for the same use on the same roadway, and to create a cohesive development pattern, site development regulations will be dependent on the roadway type where the development occurs. Certain industrial and civic uses will not be subject to the maximum setbacks. **Exceptions to the maximum setback requirements are proposed in Amendment DO-4.** CBD and DMU zoning exempt from maximum and rear setback provision.

### Site Development Regulations per Roadway Type

Roadway Type	Setbacks (in feet)						Side Street	Max. Height <sup>3</sup> in feet	Building Cover/ FAR None-Impervious cover limit dictates
	Front		Rear		Side				
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max			
<b>1. Transit Roadway<sup>4</sup></b>	0	15	5	N/a	0	N/a	Consult front setback per road type	Zoning height	N/a
<b>2. Neighborhood Roadway<sup>5</sup></b>	0	35	5	N/a	0	N/a		Zoning height	N/a
<b>3. Hill Country<sup>6</sup></b>	50	N/a	25	N/a	0	N/a		Zoning height	N/a
<b>4. Highway<sup>7</sup></b>	25	N/a	25	N/a	0	N/a		Zoning height	N/a

<sup>3</sup> Building height will continue to be regulated by zoning district.

<sup>4</sup> Transit Roadways to be determined.

<sup>5</sup> All roadways that are not Transit, Hill Country or Highway Roadways.

<sup>6</sup> This roadway type applies on all properties within 1000 feet of FM 2222, FM 2244, FM 620, Loop 360 and Southwest Parkway.

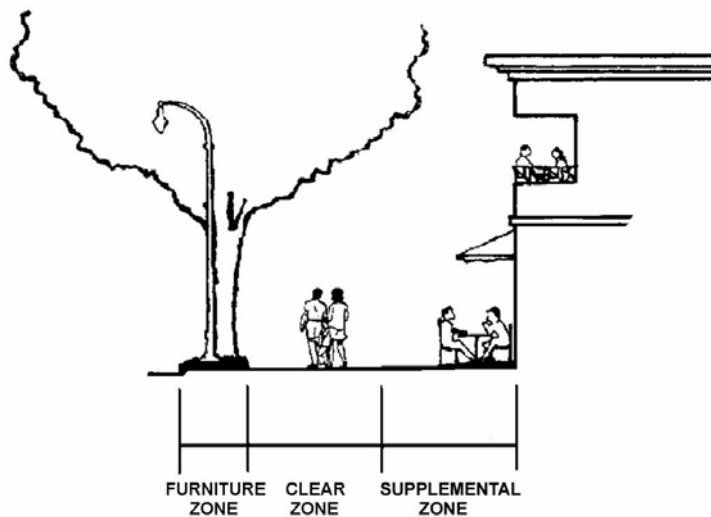
<sup>7</sup> Includes freeways, parkways, expressways, and frontage roads identified in the Austin Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

<b>DO-2</b>	<b>Limit parking in front yard.</b>	<b>Transit and Neighborhood Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	For Transit Roadways, all zoning districts. For Neighborhood Roadways, all non-residential zoning districts (exempt certain land uses, such as industrial). All new buildings, except additions to existing buildings. (auto repair, screened parking, garage doors, loading areas):	

Along Transit Roadways, parking is prohibited between the building(s) and the front property line.

Along Neighborhood Roadways, parking is prohibited between the building(s) and the front property line unless the development meets the exceptions set forth in DO-5.

Along Internal Circulation Routes (whether built as public streets or as private drives), all buildings must have an adjacent sidewalk to the entrance, followed by an Internal Circulation Route. Parking is prohibited between the building entrance and the curb edge of the Internal Circulation Route. (See Atlanta example below and diagrams in C-1.) Parallel parking is allowed on an internal circulation drive.



*Atlanta's Design Standards set out the relationship of buildings to sidewalks and private drives or streets.*

Courtesy City of Atlanta

*Development orientation for buildings along public streets or within a development containing a street-like internal circulation system.*

<b>DO-3</b>	<b>Orient building(s) according to roadway type hierarchy.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	For Transit Roadways, all zoning districts. For Neighborhood, Highway and Hill Country Roadways, all non-residential zoning districts (exempt certain land uses, such as industrial). All new buildings, except additions to existing buildings. In no case would this require orienting development toward a street with zoning of SF6 or below.	

- a) At least one customer entrance must face the principal street and connect directly to principal street sidewalk as established through the roadway type hierarchy indicated in the table above (Transit Roadway first, etc.).
- b) If a property is located along or includes more than one road type, then the front setback, parking lot prohibition and principal entrances for each roadway type only apply to the street frontage, not the entire site. For instance, if the development is located on the corner of a Highway and Transit Roadway, the buildings must comply with the site development regulations only along the Transit Roadway street frontage.
- c) For sites located on a corner on Transit or Neighborhood Roadways, the building(s) within 100 feet of the corner may not have a parking area between the building and the property line along the first 75 feet from the corner.
- d) For sites located on a corner on Transit or Neighborhood Roadways, the development may not contain an auto-oriented use with the following exceptions:
  - a. The corner development may contain a single drive-in service lane if the building located at the corner complies with all of the following:
    - i. consists of at least three users (i.e., the building is not a detached pad), and
    - ii. one of the users has outdoor seating, and
    - iii. the drive-in service is screened from street view by being located behind the development.

<b>DO-4</b>	<b>Allow exceptions to maximum front setback to protect natural features and historically-significant resources.</b>	<b>Transit and Neighborhood Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts (exempt certain land uses, such as industrial). All new buildings, except additions to existing buildings.	

If any of the following are within the maximum building setback area, the setback area shall be increased administratively only to the extent needed to preserve or accommodate the feature.

- i. Protected tree,

- ii. Significant stand of trees (to be defined in landscaping code)
- iii. Critical environmental feature
- iv. Natural drainage feature (including water detention facility placed in the setback due to topography)
- v. Historically-significant resource (determination made by Historic Preservation Officer)

<b>DO-5</b>	<b>Allow exceptions to front yard parking limitation.</b>	<b>Neighborhood Roadways Only</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	Exception allowed for any use subject to limitation (see Amendment DO-2).	

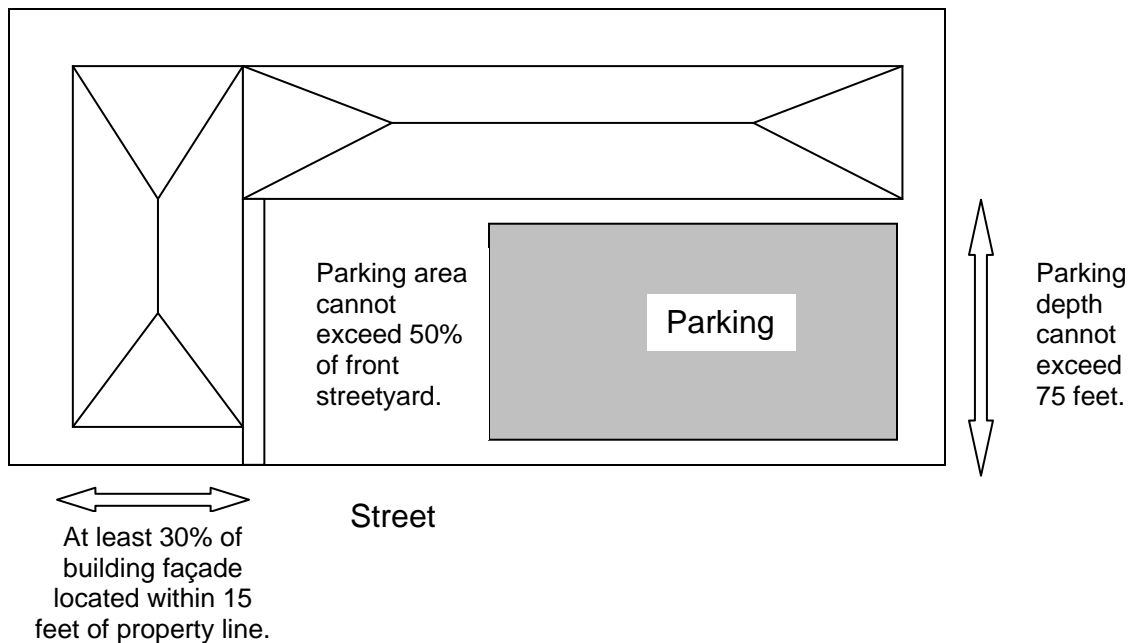
On a Neighborhood Roadway, parking may be located in front of a building if 4 of the following five options are met:

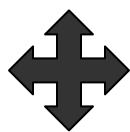


- a) A shaded sidewalk at least 10 feet wide leads to the main customer entrance from the property line. No more than one vehicle lane can cross the sidewalk.
- b) The parking area comprises less than 50% of the front streetyard.
- c) The parking area does not exceed 75 feet in depth between the property line and the building.
- d) At least 30% of a building façade is located within 15 feet of the property line.
- e) A drive-in service is not provided on-site.

A shaded sidewalk at least 10 feet wide leading to the main customer entrance. No more than one vehicle lanes can cross the sidewalk.

*Example from Raleigh code*





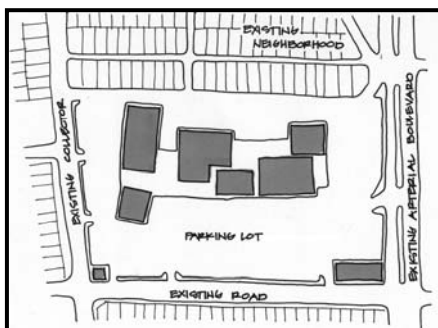
## CONNECTIVITY

### Key Issues

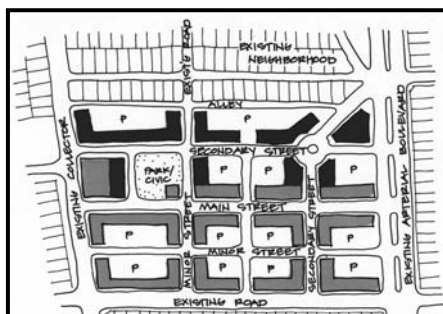
Connectivity refers to how people get to and move within the commercial development, either by foot, bike or motorized transport. Of importance to many of those taking the survey and those concerned with traffic and air quality, is ensuring that access to commercial development is feasible and comfortable by means other than the automobile. These proposed amendments will also help create a built environment that encourages walking and cycling, thus helping to improve air quality and make Austin a fit city.

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>C-1</b>	<b>Create street-like internal circulation system.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All zoning districts on Transit Roadways. For Neighborhood, Highway and Hill Country Roadways, all non-residential zoning districts (exempt certain land uses, such as industrial). Projects that require site plans, except additions to existing buildings.	



Austin's code currently allows commercial and industrial street block lengths of 2,000 feet, and this is only triggered when a street must be constructed through the site, which is rare. To put the 2,000 block length in perspective, downtown blocks are 276 feet by 276 feet. Therefore, a 2,000-foot by 2,000-foot block is the size of 53 downtown blocks. In most cases, commercial development occurs on large sites that are not required to provide internal public streets. This results in "superblocks" of development. Superblocks limit connectivity, increase traffic congestion within the site and on local roadways and complicate redevelopment.



To mitigate the impact of superblocks, any site plan for a development larger than 660 feet in depth and 330 feet in length must comply with the following:

- a) Site must be divided into blocks no longer than 660 feet by 330 feet. The maximum block length applies both to blocks containing building and blocks containing parking fields (a 660' x 330' foot block creates over 217,000 buildable square feet).
- b) An Internal Circulation Route connecting the blocks must form an interconnected grid-like system. The Internal Circulation Route is defined as either a public street or a private drive edged by a curb. Major circulation

routes cannot exceed 660 feet between intersections. If a private drive, the length is measured from center of intersection to center of intersection. If a public or private street, the block length is measured from curb edge to curb edge. Parking is not permitted within Internal Circulation Routes except for parallel parking or head-in parking adjacent to the curb.

- i. Contiguous green space and plazas are not subject to the block-length requirements, but if the contiguous green space or plaza is longer than 800 feet, it must be bisected by a pedestrian and bicycle shared use path every 800 feet.
- c) Parking bays (parking aisles, parking spaces) shall not exceed 330 feet in length.
- d) Utility lines must not be located beneath surface parking areas. This is designed to facilitate future redevelopment.
- e) Curbside parallel parking is permitted on each new public street.
- f) The Fire Code is revised to treat internal private drives the same as city public streets for purposes of parallel and head-in parking provided the private drive meets City of Austin street width standards.
- g) *Provide 5 foot sidewalks along all blocks, including blocks containing surface parking. (See Country Club Plaza and Gresham OR examples below.)* For each Internal Circulation Route and street subject to amendment C-1, a sidewalk is provided on each side. A similar requirement already exists for subdivision developments and for commercial and office blocks edged by public streets. A sidewalk is not required along the frontage of Highways or Hill Country Roadways.



*Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri, opened in 1924. It is the nation's first greenfield suburban shopping center specifically designed for shoppers arriving by cars.*

Country Club Plaza followed the conventional format of parking lots in front of the stores, but it did this with a block system of internal drives set up as streets and with the parking lot across the private drives from the stores.

This design has enabled the shopping center to intensify into a mixed use district. Many of the original surface lots are now parking garages or buildings.

Local examples:

- La Frontera
- Mueller big box area



Gresham OR development with sidewalks surrounding each parking block.

<b>C-2</b>	<b>Options to improve traffic congestion and improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connectivity.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts (exempt certain land uses, such as industrial). All new buildings, except additions to existing buildings.	

All sites or developments larger than 5 acres shall be required to select from below to improve traffic congestion and enhance car and pedestrian connectivity.

Transit and Neighborhood Roadway sites that comply with maximum setbacks and do not have parking between the building and the street do not have to comply with this requirement.

A “shaded sidewalk” means either (a) a sidewalk at least 8 feet wide made of pervious concrete with native shade trees at 20-30 foot intervals or of standard concrete with the trees planted in grates or (b) a 5 foot sidewalk adjacent to a landscape strip at least 10 feet wide (c) a sidewalk covered with weather-protection materials (such as awnings).

- a) *Provide shaded sidewalk alongside building façade facing street and parking lot.* For all building frontages adjacent to or facing parking, a shaded sidewalk at least 6 feet wide and raised above the level of the parking via a defined edge is provided adjacent to the building. ADA ramps alongside the building must also be shaded.
- b) *Provide shaded sidewalks within site to all buildings.* For all sidewalks within a site, provide shade along at least 75% of sidewalks either through shade trees planted in the Furniture Zone at 20-30 foot intervals or through awnings attached to building facades.
- c) *Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections from adjacent ROW.* Where public ROW or parkland is adjacent to the property line, provide pedestrian and bicycle access from that ROW to the building entrance. The pedestrian and bicycle access points must be fully accessible during operating hours.
- d) *Provide vehicular and pedestrian connections between sites.* Provide private drive or public street connections and sidewalk connection to existing private drives or public streets and sidewalks on adjacent sites. If the adjacent site does not have street or drive connections and sidewalk connections, provide a stub-out at the property line at least every 660 feet or less.
- e) *Provide shaded sidewalk alongside driveways that intersect with a public street.*
- f) *Provide pedestrian connection to adjacent residential development.* If there is a non-residential development adjacent to the site, provide a pedestrian connection to those buildings, up to the property line, and to an existing pathway if one is present on the adjacent site.

g) *Limit curb cuts.* Provide no more than one curb cut onto arterials or highways. Connections between site and adjacent arterials and highways occur no more frequently than every 330 feet. An Internal Circulation Route built to full streetscape standards does not count as a curb cut.

h) *Enhance physical fitness opportunities and multi-modal connectivity by providing shower facilities.*

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
Office uses	1 shower facility and 3 lockers for buildings more than 10,000 sf <sup>8</sup>
Commercial uses	1 shower facility and 3 lockers for every building exceeding 50,000 sf of gross floor area
Industrial uses	1 shower facility and 3 lockers for every building exceeding 100,000 sf of gross floor area

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<sup>8</sup> ADA requirements may not permit a single unisex shower if the expected occupant load exceeds 10. The number of required showers may be increased to 2 ADA showers.



## PARKING

### Key Issues

For most development projects, surface parking lots account for the largest impervious cover on sites, creating or exacerbating the following problems:

- **Visually-blighted environment:** A positive public view from our roadways is a critical one to foster, as this view is from which most visitors and residents experience, understand and form an image of the city. Large parking lots do not offer the visual appeal as a building or natural environment would.
- **Reduced pedestrian accessibility:** Many surface parking lots, due to their extreme size, detract from the pedestrian’s ability to comfortably and quickly access the principal entrance.
- **Increased parking supply reduces interest in utilizing less polluting and land-consuming modes of transportation.** Large amounts of free parking discourages the use of alternative modes of transportation.
- **Inefficient use of land:** Many retailers exceed Austin’s current minimum parking requirement in order to assure more than ample parking during the highest peak shopping days.

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>P-1</b>	<b>Options to mitigate excess parking.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts. When parking requirement is triggered (LDC 25-6-471).	

Over-parking of sites, the results of which are often described as “oceans of asphalt,” creates visual blight and inefficient use of land that promotes suburban sprawl. Some cities around the nation (including San Antonio, TX, Colleyville, TX, Portland, OR, Ft. Collins, CO, Suffolk, VA and Phoenix, AZ), established *maximum* parking limits for all non-residential land uses. Due to stakeholder concerns about maximum parking limits, the following amendment is proposed as an alternative to establishing maximums:

If a site provides 125% or more of the parking required in Appendix A (the table in the LDC that lists land uses and their respective minimum parking requirements), at least 4 points must be earned from the following table:

<b>Group A (Highly desirable features) 4 points</b>	<b>Group B 2 points</b>	<b>Group C 1 point</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 50% of all the provided parking is located in a structured facility (above or underground) with non-sloped floors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 25% of the provided parking is located in a structured facility (above or underground).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between all rows of parking, the portion of a parking space located beyond the tire stop (generally the “nose”) is landscaped instead of paved. The landscaped area must be the front 2 feet of the parking space, and landscaping must be ground cover plants.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 50% of the provided parking is located between the building and the street (applicable only to Hill Country and Highway sites).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The excess parking on the site is due to a shared parking agreement with land uses off-site.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 75% of the parking is located to the rear of the building (applicable only to Transit and Neighborhood Roadway sites).</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distance between the street and the building does not exceed 75 feet.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 50% of the provided parking is constructed of concrete or pervious pavement (for example, pavers, open grid pavement system, pervious concrete). If located in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge zone, only concrete may be used to satisfy this option.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If structured parking provided, the ground-level of the structured parking facility must comply with pedestrian-oriented use design requirements (to be established as administrative rules), such as minimum amount of windows, minimum ceiling height and entrance location, or the parking garage is completely wrapped with buildings consisting of any land use.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least three sides of the parking lot are surrounded by buildings.</li> </ul>	

<b>P-2</b>	<b>Allow reduction of minimum parking requirements.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts.	

The minimum off-street parking requirement shall be reduced:

- a) By 1 space for each on-street parking space located in the ROW directly adjacent to the site. The on-street parking spaces are not considered provided parking for amendment P-1 (Similar ordinances are found in Greensboro, NC, Charlotte, NC and San Diego, CA.)
- b) Reduce the minimum parking requirement by 40% city-wide for all vertical mixed-use (as with the University Neighborhood Overlay, the existing 20% central city parking reduction is not applied).
- c) By up to 10% to preserve significant trees, and up to 20% to preserve protected trees (similar ordinance in San Antonio, TX, Dallas, TX, Sarasota, FL and Nashville, TN). If the applicant provides more parking spaces than the minimum required, the additional parking spaces may not result in the removal of significant stands of trees or protected trees.
- d) By 3 spaces for each drive that connects to drive on adjacent property.
- e) By 20 spaces for every car sharing vehicle provided or mixed-use projects with at least 100 residential units.
- f) By 1 space for each shower facility and 3 lockers provided if:
  - i. not required to provide shower facilities, or
  - ii. is in addition to the minimum requirements.

<b>P-3</b>	<b>Allow on-street parking to be constructed in the public ROW.</b>	<b>Transit and Neighborhood Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts.	

Along both Transit and Neighborhood Roadways, parallel parking spaces within the ROW immediately abutting the development.

On Transit Roadways, a development is entitled as a matter of right to parallel parking within the ROW immediately abutting the development. The Director of Public Works may designate certain areas along Transit Roadways as not subject to this entitlement, but the Director may not designate more than 20 percent of the frontage of any Transit Roadway as exempt from this entitlement. Beginning September 1, 2005, if the Director has not designated an area as exempt from this entitlement and an application to place

parking in the ROW is submitted, this application shall be administratively granted immediately. Approval shall be granted administratively immediately upon submission of an application.

On Neighborhood Roadways, approval of parallel parking within the ROW is subject to the approval of the Director of Public Works.



## LANDSCAPE

### Key Issues

The comments from the survey and Task Force discussions indicated that the natural environment is a defining feature of Austin's character and the key element of its attractiveness. In reviewing the current landscape ordinance, stakeholders found that there was not enough incentive to preserve undisturbed areas of native vegetation and so this proposal aims to strengthen natural area preservation.

In addition, landscape needs depend on the development orientation of the site, and since development orientation will vary by roadway type, so will some of the landscape requirements. The table below presents the site characteristics typical of sites for each roadway type and the landscape goals for each roadway.

	<b>Transit Roadway &amp; Neighborhood Roadway</b>	<b>Hill Country Roadway</b>	<b>Highway</b>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings close to the street</li> <li>• Combination of undeveloped and developed sites</li> <li>• Close to residential areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building setback varies based on site conditions.</li> <li>• Mostly undeveloped, heavily-wooded sites.</li> <li>• Hilly terrain, with some steep slopes</li> <li>• Close proximity to nature preserves</li> <li>• Endangered species and plants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building setback varies based on site conditions and developer preference.</li> <li>• Combination of undeveloped and developed sites.</li> <li>• High noise levels</li> <li>• Often major entryways into the city</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide shade along public sidewalks for pedestrians</li> <li>• Facilitate future, compact redevelopment</li> <li>• Provide additional screening from residential uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect /buffer existing preserves</li> <li>• Emphasize landscape preservation and clustering instead of replacement mitigation</li> <li>• Focus on creating functional, connected wildlife habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on appearance from highway</li> <li>• Facilitate future, compact redevelopment</li> </ul>

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>L-1</b>	<b>Revise general city-wide landscape requirements.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses when landscaping requirement is triggered (25-2-981).	

For all roadway types, the following would apply:

- a) To maintain Austin's distinctive natural environment and to conserve water, only plants and trees permitted in the "Grow Green" program may be used to satisfy landscape requirements. (The Grow Green list in the Environmental Criteria Manual will be expanded considerably to include many other species that are particularly suited for street trees and for providing shade.)
- b) Unless otherwise noted, "shade" shall mean any plants or structures that provide at least 50% opaque cover during the summer months from April to September.
- c) Mitigation for the loss of protected trees shall be calculated using canopy coverage lost (instead of by caliper inches, as currently done, and which inevitably results in reduced tree coverage on the site for at least 5-10 years).
- d) Maintain requirement to provide one tree no more than 50 feet from any parking space, but require that all landscape islands in parking lots are a minimum of 15 feet wide, rather than 8 feet to allow trees to achieve greater canopy and longer life.
- e) All required trees shall have a minimum caliper of 3" at time of planting rather than the 1 ½" currently required.
- f) Require 1 or 2 bubblers (depending on species) to be located within the drip line of each planted tree.
- g) Delete large parking lot requirement to provide a landscaping median every three parking bays. (The proposed internal "block" sizes, internal drive network and pedestrian pathway requirements will suffice to break up parking lots and reduce diagonal movements by autos.)
- h) Allow the preservation of any natural areas (left undisturbed) to count 1.5 times their surface area toward the minimum required landscape areas of the site.
- i) Require heavily-wooded sites (a TBD number of caliper inches per acre) to be processed through an alternative compliance method to allow for highest level of natural landscape preservation possible. (This will require a rules change to require these sites to inventory trees that are 1" caliper and greater, rather than the current code requirement of only surveying 6" caliper or greater.
- j) Define significant stand of trees.

<b>L-2</b>	<b>Require new Transit Roadway and Neighborhood Roadway landscape standards.</b>	<b>Transit and Neighborhood Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses when landscaping requirement is triggered (25-2-981).	

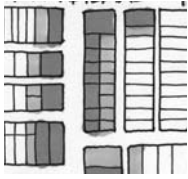
Current	Proposed
<b>Site</b>	
<p>At least 20% of landscape yard (area between the street ROW and a line that coincides with the front wall of the building and extends from the building corners to the side property lines) must be landscaped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscaping required for parking lots may count towards compliance with 20% requirement.</li> <li>• Landscaping required for screening parking lots and stormwater facilities is in addition to 20% requirement.</li> </ul>	<p>Buildings are located close to the street along Transit and Transit and Neighborhood Roadways, and though there is not an extensive frontyard to landscape, providing shade is important along streetfronts where public sidewalks are located.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 30% of hardscape surfaces should be shaded within 5 years OR consist of a light-colored / high albedo (with a reflectance of at least 0.30) material.</li> <li>• Increase to a 25% landscape frontyard requirement for projects NOT subject to the maximum front setback.</li> <li>• For projects that comply with the maximum setback, shade must be provided in the front yard in either, or both, of the following forms:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trees spaced between 20 and 30 feet at intervals appropriate for selected tree species (either on the private property or in the Furniture Zone of the ROW, depending on developer preference, utility easement location and approvals from City for license agreement). The planting area must be (a) a sidewalk made of pervious concrete, (b) a sidewalk made of standard concrete with the trees planted in grates or (c) a landscape strip at least 8 feet wide adjacent to the sidewalk.</li> <li>• The license agreement fee is waived for all shade trees planted in the Furniture Zone of the ROW.</li> <li>• Light-colored awnings or other pedestrian cover at least eight feet deep projecting from the building (option available only if buildings are located within 15 feet of the property line).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>L-3</b>	<b>Require new Highway landscape standards.</b>	<b>Highways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses when landscaping requirement is triggered (25-2-981).	

<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Site</b>	
<p>At least 20% of landscape yard must be landscaped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The landscaping required for parking lots may count towards compliance with 20% requirement.</li> <li>Landscaping required for screening parking lots and stormwater facilities is in addition to 20% requirement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 25% of the frontyard must be vegetated.</li> <li>Along at least 25 percent of the frontage adjacent to the highway, provide (or preserve) a minimum 15' deep landscape buffer planted with shade trees spaced at approximately 20 foot centers. This requirement is in addition to the 25% frontyard landscaping requirement.</li> <li>Additional 10% increments of shade tree buffer must be planted along the highway frontage for each pole sign located on the site.</li> </ul>

<b>L-4</b>	<b>Require new Hill Country Roadway landscape standards.</b>	<b>Hill Country Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses when landscaping requirement is triggered (25-2-981).	

<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Site</b>	
<p>All of the following are required and are cumulative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 20% of the landscape yard must be landscaped.</li> <li>At least 40% of the site must remain undisturbed.</li> <li>Vegetation within 100 feet (50 feet on Southwest Parkway) of the dedicated ROW may not be cleared, unless the clearing is necessary to provide utilities and access to the site.</li> <li>Clearing is prohibited within 25 feet of the dedicated ROW or drainage easement.</li> <li>The landscaping required for parking lots may count towards compliance with 20% requirement.</li> <li>Landscaping required for screening is in addition to 20% requirement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require at least 25% of frontyard to be vegetated.</li> <li>If the site is located adjacent to dedicated parkland or conservation easement, there must be a native vegetated or undisturbed setback of 100 feet from the affected property line. If both this setback and the required roadway vegetative buffer would be more than 20% of the site, the roadway vegetative buffer can be reduced equal to 20% of the square footage of the property.</li> </ul>



## LAND USE

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>LU-1</b>	<b>Provide pedestrian service with drive-in services.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All new drive-in services.	

A business that offers a drive-in service with no walk-in service must provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians.

<b>LU-2</b>	<b>Options to mitigate undesirable features of service stations.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All new service stations.	

If the planned land use is a service station, the service station must meet the following minimum standards:

- a) The street frontage of the service station land use does not exceed 50 feet.
- b) The number of vehicles that can be serviced simultaneously cannot exceed 16 and the number of vehicle queue lanes cannot exceed 4.

<b>LU-3</b>	<b>New zoning provision of Vertical Mixed Use (VMU)</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All property currently zoned "MU."	

City code currently contains no zoning for a vertical mixed use building. (The City Code does allow for a vertical mixed-use building under the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Building option.) Even structures zoned as "MU" must meet setback and parking requirements for each use—even though these requirements frequently differ. For instance, a vertical mixed use building with ground floor retail and residential above must meet one setback requirement for retail and a different setback requirement for the residential units. This has resulted in vertical mixed use projects requiring variances to compensate for these inconsistencies.

To address this situation, a zoning provision within the MU zoning category will be created titled "Vertical Mixed Use" or "VMU." Owners of any property with MU zoning may administratively elect to build under the VMU subdivision.

A VMU building shall have the following features:

1. The ground floor must have a different use from the top floor.
2. The building has no front or side setbacks.
3. The ground floor must have active uses that open onto the sidewalk.
4. The ground floor active uses must comprise at least 75% of the net length of frontage. (Net frontage is determined by taking the gross length of street frontage and subtracting required drive aisles and stairs that occur at the building perimeter.)
5. Spaces for ground level pedestrian uses shall be at least 24 feet deep.

[Source: University Neighborhood Overlay]

<b>LU-4</b>	<b>Provide amenity on large sites</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All site plans larger than 5 acres (net developable land).	

For a site that is 5 acres or larger, 10% of the site must be devoted to one of the following types of amenities:

- i. Plazas (subject to design rules in criteria manual)
- ii. Playgrounds
- iii. Natural undisturbed and contiguous open space.

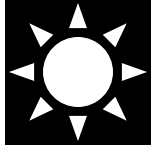
A fee may be paid in-lieu of providing an amenity only in the urban core.

The fee will be based on building square footage and will be used by the City to fund parks in the area or open space. Similar legislation may be found in the US, including locally in Round Rock, TX. Open space is required in their C-2 commercial zoning district.

<b>LU-5</b>	<b>Options to promote development of better places</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All site plans larger than 5 acres (net developable land).	

For all developments larger than 5 acres, the site shall contain at least 2 of the items from the Preferred list and shall contain no more than one of the items from the Discouraged list:

<b>Preferred items</b>	<b>Discouraged items</b>
Implements urban heat island mitigation (green roofs, light colored pavement)	Site has a single retail user that comprises more than 75% of the built space
Contains at least 200 lineal feet of VMU buildings	Contains any curb cuts more frequently than every 660 feet. (Internal Circulation Routes are not considered curb cuts.)
Site contains a mix of uses, with at least 25% of the built area dedicated to each designated use.	Site contains more than two pad sites. <sup>9</sup>
Create original context sensitive master plan for a mixed use development based on TND principles and memorializes master plan with restrictive covenant as part of a PUD.	
Provides stormwater detention through use of wet pond.	



## EXTERIOR LIGHTING

### Key Issues

The Land Development Code currently does not regulate exterior lighting, except if triggered by compatibility standards when single-family zoning or uses are located near commercial uses.

Poor lighting causes four major problems:

1. *Reduces public safety.* Glare and excessive contrast makes it difficult to see well at night. In fact, the major reason older drivers prefer not to drive at night is due to the glare caused by poor lighting<sup>10</sup>. Excessive contrast makes it difficult for the eyes to adjust quickly resulting in impaired vision, which can lead to tragedy for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.
2. *Wastes energy.* Lighting that is excessive, poorly configured or ineffective wastes energy and money.
3. *Causes light trespass.* Even if a residential area is not located within the area that triggers compatibility standards for a commercial development, light may still trespass onto residential areas.
4. *Creates light pollution.* The inability to see the night sky due to city lighting is light pollution. The pollution reduces the attractiveness of Austin as a place to live and inhibits both basic amateur and professional astronomical viewing.

Many cities throughout the US have adopted city-wide lighting ordinances including Tucson, AZ, Albuquerque, NM, Seattle, WA and Hailey, ID.



Photo A.  
Poor lighting

Photos from [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)



Photo B.  
Good lighting

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<sup>10</sup> International Dark Sky Association [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org)

**Proposed Code Amendments**

<b>EL-1</b>	<b>Use fully-shielded and full cut off light fixtures for certain exterior lighting applications.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All site plans and building permits.	

The following outdoor lighting applications shall be illuminated by fully-shielded and full cut-off fixtures:

- public street and pedestrian lighting;
- parking lots;
- roadways and pathways;
- buildings and structures;
- recreational areas;
- billboards;
- product display area lighting;
- building overhangs and open canopies.

**New Definitions**

**Fully-Shielded.** A lighting fixture constructed in such a manner that the light source is not visible when viewed from the side and all light emitted by the fixture, either directly from the lamp or a diffusing element, or indirectly by reflection or refraction from any part of the luminaire, is projected below the horizontal as determined by photometric test or certified by the manufacturer. Any structural part of the light fixture providing this shielding must be permanently affixed.

**Full Cut-off:** A luminaire light distribution where zero candela intensity occurs at or above an angle of 90 above nadir. Additionally, the candela per 1000 lamp lumens does not numerically exceed 100 (10%) at or above a vertical angle of 80 above nadir. This applies to all lateral angles around the luminaire.

**Light fixture.** The complete lighting assembly (including the lamp, housing, reflectors, lenses and shields), less the support assembly (pole or mounting bracket); a light fixture.

**Submission of Plans and Evidence of Compliance with Code**

All site plans must submit the following information:

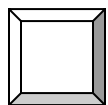
- a) Location on the premises of all lighting fixtures, both proposed and any already existing on the site and in adjacent ROWs;
- b) Description of all lighting fixtures, both proposed and existing. The description may include, but is not limited to, catalog cuts and illustrations by manufacturers (including sections where required).

Lamp or Fixture Substitution

Should any outdoor light fixture or the type of light source therein be changed after the permit has been issued, a change request must be submitted to the designated official for approval, together with adequate information to assure compliance with this Code, which must be received prior to substitution.

Non-Conforming Lighting

All outdoor lighting fixtures lawfully installed prior to and operable on the effective date of this Code are exempt from all requirements of this code until January 1, 2025. Compliance with the intent of this Code at all State and Federal facilities is encouraged.



## SIGNS

### Key Issues

Four main concerns were expressed in the stakeholder discussions and survey comments about signage in Austin:

1. Survey results indicated that “monument” signs are preferable to pole signs on scenic roadways. Projecting and hanging signs are preferable on transit and neighborhood roadways, where development will be located close to the public sidewalk, however these are currently not permitted.
2. Some building facades and roofs are painted in certain colors or designed in certain shapes typical for a certain store and are used as a way to advertise the store. The “branded” buildings are essentially signs that do not comply with sign area calculations.
3. Up-ward and internally-lit signs contribute to light pollution and glare.
4. Address numbers are difficult to find, and sometimes are not present at all, making it difficult to find a business. Improving the visibility of street addresses also helps emergency service personnel find a place.

Currently the City of Austin does not have sign inspection or enforcement. To insure that current and the proposed new regulations are enforced, the Task Force will propose a fee ordinance in the near future to require annual sign fees to support enforcement staff.

Changes to all the commercial sign districts are proposed, however please note that the historic district signage requirements are not affected by this proposal.

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>S-1</b>	<b>Add new sign definitions.</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All signs subject to sign ordinance, as currently stated in Code.	

Currently, the sign ordinance defines commercial flag, freestanding sign, multi-tenant center sign, projecting sign, roof sign, sidewalk sign and wall sign. The Task Force recommends defining and permitting the following other types of signs not currently defined in the Code:

***Awning sign.*** Any awning containing signage used to identify a business, profession, service, product, or activity conducted, sold or offered on the premises.

***Hanging sign.*** A sign that is suspended from the underside of a horizontal plane surface projecting from the building or is directly attached to the building façade and majority of sign area is perpendicular to the building facade. This includes projecting signs.

**Internally Illuminated Sign.** A sign illuminated by light sources enclosed entirely within the sign cabinet and not directly visible from outside the sign.

**Monument sign.** Any freestanding sign that does not have more than 15% free clearance between the face of the sign and the ground or is supported by a monolithic structure which is not less in width than one-half the maximum sign width.

**Pole sign-** A freestanding sign that has more than 15% free clearance between the face of the sign and the ground.

<b>S-2</b>	<b>Revise city-wide sign regulations.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All signs subject to sign ordinance, as currently stated in Code.	

- a) The sign area calculation shall include any areas on the wall and roof of the building that have trademarked or copyrighted colors, graphics or building features and shapes. This excludes any awnings that may be used. This provision is intended to limit the use of the building as a sign and to promote future re-use.
- b) Sign review shall be integrated into the building permit process to determine the portion of the maximum allowable signage dedicated to the building itself (as opposed to signs attached to the building). At the time of the building review, the applicant shall provide all information about signage for the submitted building. This submitted information shall become part of the building permit's binding conditions.
- c) If the sign is produced by an artist selected from the juried image registry maintained by the Arts in Public Places (AIPP) Program, the allowable sign area may be increased by 100%, as long as the company name and logo do not exceed the maximum sign district area. AIPP website: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/aipp/>
- d) Internally illuminated signs are permitted only if constructed with an opaque background and translucent text and symbols. Internally illuminated signs are prohibited on Hill Country Roadways only.
- e) All pole signs citywide are amortized over 10 years from the date of enactment of the ordinance. At that time, all pole signs citywide must be removed. The owner of a pole sign may petition to keep the pole sign upon a showing by the owner that the sign is original and unique. The owner of a pole sign along a highway may petition to keep the pole sign upon a showing that the owner has complied with the enhanced shade tree planting requirements relating to highway developments containing pole signs.



<b>S-3</b>	<b>Revise sign districts, areas and heights</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All signs subject to sign ordinance, as currently stated in Code.	

As part of the proposal to tie regulations to roadway type, the Task Force proposes that the sign ordinance be modified to reflect the creation of the Highway, Hill Country Roadway and Transit and Neighborhood Roadway Types.

Current Regulations			Proposed Regulations		
Sign Districts	Applicability	Signs Permitted	Sign Districts	Applicability	Signs Permitted
Expressway Corridor	IH-35, US 183, US 290, SH 71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freestanding or roof</li> <li>Wall</li> <li>Commercial flag</li> </ul>	Highway	Designated AMATP highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pole, monument or roof</li> <li>Perpendicular</li> <li>Wall</li> <li>Awning or Commercial Flag</li> </ul>
Scenic Roadway	Roadways listed in LDC 25-10-6 <sup>11</sup> and Hill Country Roadways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freestanding</li> <li>Wall</li> </ul>	Hill Country Roadway	Currently-designated Hill Country Roadways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monument</li> <li>Perpendicular</li> <li>Wall</li> </ul>
Neighborhood Sign	TND, NPCD Infill options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wall, awning, berm or hanging sign</li> </ul>	Transit & Neighborhood Roadway	All other roadways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monument</li> <li>Perpendicular</li> <li>Wall or Awning or Commercial Flag</li> <li>Sidewalk</li> </ul>
Neighborhood Commercial	LO, LR, CR and W/LO zoning districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freestanding</li> <li>Wall</li> <li>Commercial flag</li> </ul>			
Commercial Sign	Includes land not in any other sign district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freestanding or roof</li> <li>Wall</li> <li>Commercial flag</li> </ul>			

<sup>11</sup> The following are subject to the Scenic Roadway sign district regulations (those in bold are Hill Country Roadways): Arterial 8 (Adelaide Dr./Forsythia Dr.); Barton Springs Road; Loop 1; **Loop 360** (south of US 183); **RM 620** (from SH 71 to Anderson Mill Road); **RM 2222** (west of Mopac); **RM 2244**; Lake Austin Blvd.; West Cesar Chavez St.; Riverside Drive; Spicewood Springs Road (from Mesa Dr to Loop 360); William Cannon Dr (Brodie to Southwest Pkwy); Escarpment Blvd (William Cannon Dr. to Arterial 11 (SH45); Arterial 5 (McKinney Falls Pkwy from US 183 to William Cannon Dr.); FM 973 (from SH 71 to US 183); SH 71 east of IH 35; US 183 South of SH 71; Cameron Rd. (north of 183); Parmer Lane (except for the area between Loop 1 and IH 35); Stassney Lane, east of IH 35; Slaughter Lane; and Old Spicewood Springs Rd. (from Loop 360 to Old Lampasas Trail); **Southwest Parkway**.

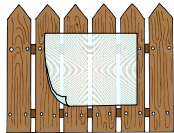
### Table of Proposed Changes to the Sign Area and Height Requirements

Sign Districts	Signs Permitted	Proposed Sign Area and Height
<b>Highway</b>		
	(1) Monument or Roof for each street frontage	<p>Decrease current maximum size and height applicable to the Expressway Sign District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pole, Monument and Roof Sign Area <b>FROM</b> 60sf sign area for lots with less than 86 linear feet of street frontage, or 300 sf sign area for lots with more than 86 linear feet of street frontage <b>TO</b> TOTAL signage (all signs) 60 sf for single tenant, and 60 sf for each additional tenant up to a maximum of 300sf.</li> <li>• Pole Sign Height <b>FROM</b> the greater of 35 feet above frontage street pavement grade; or 20 feet above grade at the base of the sign <b>TO</b> 35 feet above finished grade of sign.</li> <li>• Monument Sign Height <b>TO</b> 12 feet above finished grade of sign.</li> <li>• Roof Sign Height <b>FROM</b> lesser of five feet above the building façade or five feet above the maximum height permitted for a freestanding sign <b>TO</b> the same (maintain current requirements).</li> </ul>
	(1) Projecting or Hanging for each store	<p>Projecting or hanging signs cannot exceed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 square feet in area</li> <li>• Lesser of 6 feet, or distance equal to 2/3 the width of abutting sidewalk (same as current downtown requirements for projecting signs)</li> </ul>
	(1) Awning or Commercial Flag, for each store	Counts towards wall sign area calculation.
	Wall	<b>FROM</b> Wall cannot exceed 20% of building façade area of the first 15 feet of the building and 10% of total building façade area, OR 64sf, whichever is less <b>TO</b> 1 sf for each 1 lineal feet of building façade to a maximum of 400 sf.
<b>Hill Country Roadway</b>		Along Hill Country Roadways, the signs must comply with the Hill Country building materials requirements.
	(1) Monument	Maintain current requirements: Sign area cannot exceed 0.4 square feet for each linear foot of street frontage or 64 square feet.
	Wall	<b>FROM</b> total sign area (including all signs, except freestanding) is limited to 10% of the façade area of the first 15 feet of the building <b>TO</b> 1 sf for each 1 lineal feet of building façade to a maximum of 400 sf.

Neighborhood and Transit Roadway		
	(1) Monument for each street frontage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain current requirements: Sign area cannot exceed 0.4 square feet for each linear foot of street frontage or 64 square feet</li> <li>• A monument sign cannot exceed 12 feet in height above finished grade of sign.</li> </ul>
	(1) Projecting or Hanging for each store	Projecting or hanging signs cannot exceed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 square feet in area</li> <li>• Lesser of 6 feet, or distance equal to 2/3 the width of abutting sidewalk (same as downtown requirements for projecting signs)</li> </ul>
	Awning	Counts towards wall sign area calculation.
	Wall	<b>FROM</b> Wall cannot exceed 10% of building façade area of the first 15 feet of the building (in neighborhood commercial sign districts) and 20% of the first 15 feet of the building façade (in commercial sign districts), OR 64sf, whichever is less <b>TO</b> 1 sf for each 1 lineal feet of building façade to a maximum of 400 sf.
	(1) Commercial Flag for each store	Counts towards wall sign area calculation.
	Sidewalk	Maintain current requirements

<b>S-4</b>	<b>Provide visible street address numbers.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses.	

Street addresses, visible from the public ROW, must be located on the sign or the building. The street address, up to 10 square feet, does not count towards sign area. Currently a street address is not required and may be up to 6 square feet (the 6 sf does not count towards the sign area).



## SCREENING & COMPATIBILITY

### Key Issues

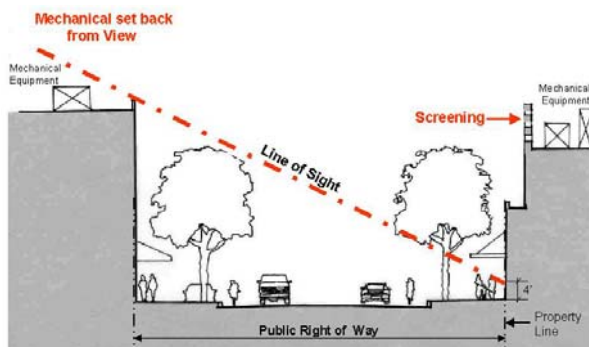
Two of the goals of this initiative is to improve the quality of development near neighborhoods and to reduce the visual impacts of the more unattractive components of development, such as dumpsters and loading areas. Several amendments are proposed to accomplish both goals.

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>SC-1</b>	<b>Options to screen equipment and utilities.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential zoning districts. Projects that require site plans.	

Currently, screening of mechanical equipment, trash dumpsters and other utilities is required when residential uses are located near the commercial development and in the downtown CBD and DMU zoning districts. The Task Force wants to extend this requirement city-wide to all commercial development, regardless of location. For all non-residential development within the City of Austin, regardless of roadway type, at least 2 of the following three options shall be chosen:

- a) All mechanical, solid waste and utility-related equipment must be screened from public view, including rooftop equipment. (Major utility facilities and antennae are exempt from requirement.) See illustration below.
- b) Set storage, utilities, trash collection and loading areas at least 20 feet away from all sidewalks and residential uses. The accessible ADA route required to serve the storage, trash collection and loading area is not considered in determining compliance with this option.
- c) Structural screening of dumpsters and loading areas consists of same building materials as the main building.





## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

### Key Issues

Concerns about the design of stormwater management facilities were expressed in the survey comments and during stakeholder discussions. Many stormwater facilities are constructed with concrete walls and are not integrated aesthetically or functionally into the site, resulting in an unattractive facility, even if screened with vegetation.

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>SM-1</b>	<b>Construct attractive stormwater facilities.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All new stormwater facilities (triggered by subdivision and site plan).	

All stormwater facilities are required to comply with the requirements below.

- All supporting walls of structural facilities that extend within 50 feet of a public ROW must be constructed of or faced with stone.
- If fencing is required, chain-link fences are prohibited if within 50 feet of the public ROW.

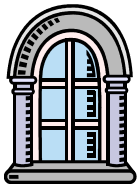
Landscaping around the facilities would still be required, however use of plants to screen the facility would not be required.



Facility constructed of stone and would comply with proposal SM-1.



Facility that complies with current requirements, but not with proposed SM-1.



## BUILDING DESIGN

### Key Issues

Building design is regulated in many communities throughout the US (an estimated 3,000 cities<sup>12</sup>) to improve the look of the community, and in some communities, to enforce a certain character or style. For instance, in Sante Fe, NM adobe-style buildings are required. In Austin, as heard from stakeholders and as seen in some survey comments, diversity in building design is important, so the proposal is not prescriptive about requiring buildings to be of a certain style. The proposal instead provides options that help insure buildings have visual appeal and contain functional design elements that make the pedestrian experience at all sites pleasant.

### Proposed Code Amendments

<b>BD-1</b>	<b>Restrict certain building materials.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses and vertical mixed-use that includes residential. Land use exemption list applies. Projects that require building plans, except additions and interior and exterior remodels.	

- a) Plain concrete block (painted or unpainted) may only be used on rear or interior side façade walls or as an accent material (less than 25% of total façade).
- b) EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finishing System) prohibited at the ground floor only.
- c) Vinyl siding is prohibited, unless used as an accent material (less than 25% of total façade).
- d) Concrete tilt-up walls without knock-out panels (To be acceptable, knock-out panels should allow for a storefront module at the ground floor of 12' wide x 12' tall minimum every 75 feet. Upper-story modules should allow at a minimum for window openings of 10 sf every 20 feet).

<b>BD-2</b>	<b>Provide glazing on building facades.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses (except office). Land use exemption list applies (tbd). Projects that require building plans, except additions and interior and exterior remodels.	

- a) Buildings with 50,000 square feet or greater footprint. All facades (with the exception of a single facade facing the loading area) must have glazing.

<sup>12</sup> American Planning Association

- i. At least 50% of the front wall area that is between 2 and 10 feet above grade must consist of clear glazing.
  - ii. At least 25% of the wall area on all other facades, except the façade facing the loading area, must consist of glazing.
  - iii. If a single story building has a façade higher than 20 feet, the façade area above 15 feet is subject to the same window requirement as the second floor requirement.
  - iv. Second-floor front facades must provide a minimum of 25% glazing between 3' and 8', as measured from that story's finished floor level.
  - v. To facilitate the development of a street wall, any façade that is built up to an interior mid-block property line is not required to have glazing on that façade if:
    - i. The property adjacent to that façade is not a parking area; and
    - ii. No prohibitions and no contractual or legal impediments exist that would prevent a building being constructed on the adjacent property up to the wall of the façade.
- b) Buildings less than 50,000 square feet. All facades (with the exception of a single facade facing the loading area) must have glazing.
- i. At least 50% of the front wall area that is between 2 and 10 feet above grade must consist of glazing.
  - ii. If a single story building has a façade higher than 20 feet, the façade area above 15 feet is subject to the same window requirement as the ground level requirement.
  - iii. Second-floor front facades must provide a minimum of 25% glazing between 3' and 8', as measured from that story's finished floor level.
  - iv. To facilitate the development of a street wall, any façade that is built up to an interior mid-block property line is not required to have glazing on that façade if:
    - i. The property adjacent to that façade is not a parking area; and
    - ii. No prohibitions and no contractual or legal impediments exist that would prevent a building being constructed on the adjacent property up to the wall of the façade.

<b>BD-3</b>	<b>Waive annual license fee for pedestrian cover and trees in ROW.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All land uses on Transit and Neighborhood Roadways.	

Currently in the CBD and DMU zoning districts, owners of buildings with pedestrian cover, such as awnings or balconies over the public sidewalk, do not pay an annual license fee, which is typically charged by the City for all private structures in the ROW. This amendment would extend that to all zoning districts to encourage the construction of buildings with pedestrian cover over the public sidewalk.

In addition, trees planted in the ROW will be considered pedestrian cover, and the annual license fee for those will be waived too. It is the policy of the City Council that shade trees are an important component of the public right-of-way just as utility lines are an important component. Therefore, by October 1, 2005, the Director of Public Works shall complete a plan for all Transit Roadways specifying how and where shade trees may be planted in the ROW at intervals not less than every 30 feet. As of October 1, 2005, approval of an application to plant shade trees in the ROW along Transit Roadways in the locations and manner specified in the Director's plan shall be granted administratively immediately upon submission of the application.

<b>BD-4</b>	<b>Requirements for single story buildings larger than 100,000 square feet.</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
Applies to:	All non-residential land uses (except office). Land use exemption list applies. Projects that require building plans, except additions less than 30% of total square footage or less than 5,000 square feet and interior and exterior remodels.	

Large buildings such as big box stores play a significant affect on the built environment due to their size and the amount of land they use. They can be difficult to adapt to different uses. To promote reusability and sustainability the following items apply to single commercial story buildings larger than 100,000 square feet.

1. Building is structurally and architecturally designed to be subdivided into smaller spaces. If the building is taller than 18 feet to the bottom of the roof joist, the building permit shall include architectural and engineer's plans demonstrating that the building is architecturally and structurally designed for the future addition of a functional interior second floor within the envelope.
2. Building façade consists of 75% masonry or limestone excluding the window area and rear service area on sides visible to the public.
3. Building has 50% glazing on the front façade, 25% glazing and cutouts for an additional 25% glazing on sides visible to the public.
4. Building has a Green building rating of at least 2 stars.

<b>BD-5</b>	<b>Options to improve building design</b>	<b>ALL Roadways</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	All non-residential land uses (except for office). Land use exemption list applies. Projects that require building plans, except additions and interior and exterior remodels.	

Each building plan must earn 4 points. If the building plan shows any of the negative design features listed below, one additional point must be earned for each negative design feature.

1. Building(s) is one story and greater than 20 feet tall, floor to bottom of roof structure.
2. Building façade exceeds 200 feet.
3. Building is a pad building with any of the following features:<sup>13</sup>
  - a. drive-through;
  - b. building is separated from other buildings by parking on at least three sides;
  - c. the building's street facing façade is shorter in length than the side facades.

(Two negative points if building contains all three features.)
4. Building is a pad building located in the CBD with any of the following features (Four negative points):
  - a. drive-through;
  - b. building is separated from other buildings by surface parking on at least two sides;
5. Building is not vertical mixed-use (Transit Roadways and CBD only).
6. Building is a prototype, or any portion of exterior consists of trademarked or copyrighted design features used by national chain.
7. Retail activities inside building do not have direct entrance along building exterior (liner store treatment).
8. False fronts or shaped parapets are created to increase apparent size of building or house signage/corporate identity logos, etc.

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<sup>13</sup> Not applicable in conventional use zones.

<b>Group A (Highly desirable features) 4 points</b>	<b>Group B 2 points</b>	<b>Group C 1 point</b>
VMU structure (1 extra point if VMU structure contains at least 25% residential and 25% of either office or retail)	Provide "liner" stores (at least 75% of building façade must be storefronts for at least two other uses).	Green Building rating: 1 point for each star above minimum requirement
	Use light-colored roofing.	Building contains liner stores inlaid into façade of user larger than 100,000 square feet. (1 point for each liner store)
	Provide shower facilities (refer to Connectivity amendments for standards).	Façade articulation
	Building contains green roof.	Roof design
	Building integrates solar power generation into building design (e.g., rooftop solar panels or Building Integrated Photovoltaics)	Building materials
		Primary entrance design
		Glazing on ground-floor facades that face the street or parking lot have a Visible Transmittance (VT) of 0.6 or higher.
		Improves storefronts to new regulatory standard for glazing type/size & shading.
		Complies with neighborhood design guidelines, as prescribed in the Urban Design Criteria Manual.
		Incorporates café seating on sidewalk or Supplemental Zone

## Explanation of Options

### *Façade Articulation (pick one)*

1. Changes in plane with a depth of at least 24 inches, either diagonally, horizontally, or vertically, at intervals of not less than 20 feet and not more than 100 feet.
2. Changes of color, texture, or material, either diagonally, horizontally or vertically, at intervals of not less than 20 feet and not more than 100 feet.
3. A repeating pattern of wall recesses and projections, such as bays, offsets, reveals or projecting ribs, that has a relief of at least eight inches.

### *Primary Entrance Design*

At least three of the following design elements at the primary entrance, so that the primary entrance is architecturally prominent and clearly visible from the abutting street:

- a. Architectural details such as arches, friezes, tile work, murals, or moldings.
- b. Integral planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaping or seating.
- c. Enhanced exterior light fixtures such as wall sconces, light coves with concealed light sources, ground-mounted accent lights, or decorative pedestal lights.
- d. Prominent three-dimensional features, such as belfries, chimneys, clock towers, domes, spires, steeples, towers, or turrets.
- e. A repeating pattern of pilasters projecting from the façade wall by a minimum of eight inches or architectural or decorative columns.

### *Roof Design*

Roofs must have at least one of the following design elements:

- a. Parapets with horizontal tops having height changes of at least one foot occurring horizontally no less than every 100 feet. Parapets that do not have horizontal tops must have pitched or rounded tops with a pattern that repeats or varies no less than every 100 feet. All parapets must have detailing such as cornices, moldings, trim, or variations in brick coursing.
- b. Sloping roofs with at least two of the following design elements:
  - i. Slope of at least 5:12.
  - ii. Two or more slope planes.

- iii. Overhanging eaves extending at least three feet beyond the supporting wall.

*Light-colored roofing*

Buildings must use roofing having a Solar Reflectance Index (SRI)<sup>14</sup> as required in the table below for a minimum of 75% of roof surface; OR install a vegetated roof for at least 50% of the total roof area; OR install a combination of vegetated roof and SRI-compliant roof for at least 75% of roof area.

Low-slope roof: less than or equal to 2:12	SRI = 78
Steep slope roof: > 2:12	SRI = 29

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<sup>14</sup> Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) combines reflectivity and emittance to measure a roof's overall ability to reject solar heat. The Environmental Energy Technologies Division at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (<http://eande.lbl.gov/CoolRoof/membrane.htm>) lists SRI values associated with several different brands and types of low-slope membranes. Steep slope roofing applications can be found with a SRI up to 62.]