



TOWER DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE DRAFT

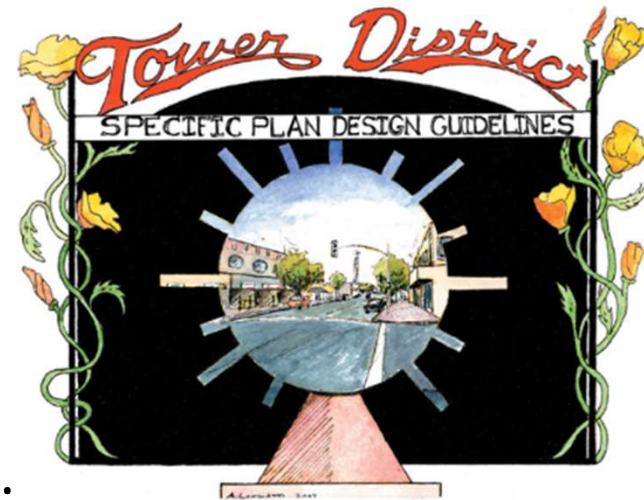
APRIL 2025



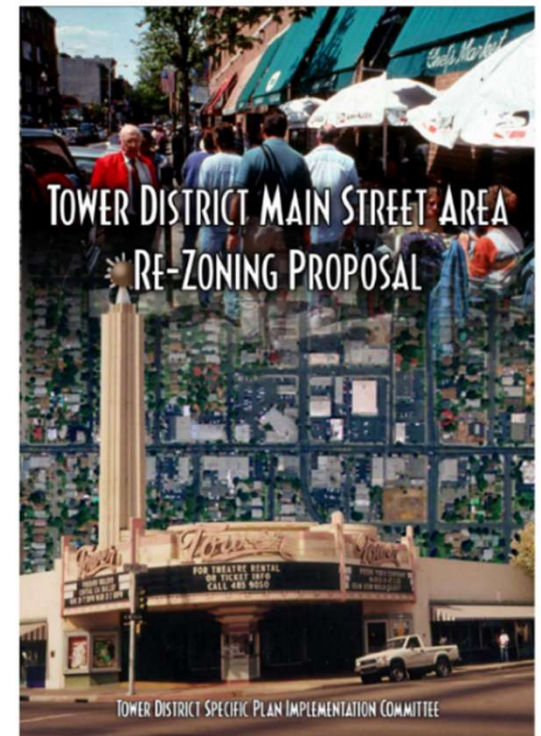
Why add Standards and update the Guidelines?

- The 2004 Guidelines are over 20 years old and conditions and design practices have changed.
- Key Guidelines were written into zoning in 2015, when the Citywide Development Code was adopted.
- Specific Plan policies need to be integrated.
- Development feasibility needs to be addressed to implement Fresno's Housing Element.
- California law requires “objective standards” to expedite review of qualifying housing projects

Note that “Standards” are explicit requirements, whereas “Guidelines” are recommendations that are often open to interpretation.



A Joint Project of the Tower District Design Review Committee and the Tower District Specific Plan Implementation Committee, Fall, 2004



How will the **GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS** document be different than the **2011 Guidelines**?

1. Update terminology to match the Citywide Development Code.
2. Refer to Development Code where guidelines have already been codified.
3. Split each topic into two subsections: Standards and Guidelines.
 - a) When a guideline is already fairly objective, make it an objective standard.
 - b) When a guideline is more subjective, keep it as a guideline to maintain flexibility.
4. Add Standards and Guidelines to provide a clear and complete framework, especially in light of State streamlining laws.



ORIGINAL STRUCTURE

E. Parking/Vehicular Access

1. Surface Parking Lot Design

- The rear of the lot is the preferred location for surface parking.
- Surface parking lots adjacent to a street should only be approved if site conditions make it impossible to locate the parking behind the building. Under no circumstances should a parking lot be located between a building and the street for new construction.
- In no case should surface parking occupy more than 50% of a lot.
- Handicapped and bicycle parking should be provided for per current City standards.
- When a parking lot must be located adjacent to a street, a clearly marked pedestrian walkway must be provided from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building.
- When a parking lot must be located adjacent to a street, it should be buffered from the street with a screening wall or fence 3 to 4 feet in height in order to enclose the parking lot. Screening walls or fencing must be attractively designed and must use complementary (or the same) materials used for the building or materials that are specific to the area.
- Screening walls should be located 2 to 3 feet back from the sidewalk to allow adequate room for landscape materials. In addition, greenery/vegetation on or through the wall or fence is encouraged.
- Screening walls must have one pedestrian access point for every 50 feet of street frontage.

THIS



The parking lot for this apartment house is behind the main structure, accessed by a driveway along the side of the building. This is the preferred placement for Multiple family parking.

NOT THIS



The parking lot for this apartment complex is in front of the main structure. This arrangement is never appropriate.

NEW STRUCTURE

Refine general narratives to be Guidelines, such as at beginning of sections (not shown)

Divide items into Standards and Guidelines sub-sections

E. Parking Setback

Change terminology to match Development Code

1. Surface Parking

a. Standards

- Surface parking shall be located behind the primary building and shall not be located between any primary building and a public sidewalk or street. For corner lots, this standard shall apply to the street with the highest classification per the Land Use and Circulation Map in the Fresno General Plan.
- Surface parking shall occupy no more than 50% of any lot.

b. Guidelines

When a surface parking is permitted adjacent to a public sidewalk or street due to a corner location, the following guidelines will apply:

- A clearly marked pedestrian walkway should be provided from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building.
- The surface parking area should be buffered from the street with a screening wall or fence 3 to 4 feet in height. Screening walls or fencing should be attractively designed and should use complementary (or the same) materials used for the building or materials that are specific to the area.
- Screening walls should be located 2 to 3 feet back from the sidewalk to allow adequate room for landscape materials. In addition, greenery/vegetation on or through the wall or fence is encouraged.
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ORGANIZATION OF DOCUMENT

- I. Introduction
- II. Residential Single-Family Districts
- III. Residential Multi-Family Districts
- IV. Mixed-Use and Commercial Districts

RELATIONSHIP TO ZONING DESIGNATIONS

ZONING DESIGNATION	APPLICABLE SECTION
Residential Single-Family Districts (RS-1, RS-2, RS-3, RS-4, or RS-5)	Section II. Residential Single-Family Districts
Residential Multi-Family Districts (RM-1, RM-2, RM-3, or RM-MH)	Section III. Residential Multi-Family Districts
Mixed Use Districts (NMX, CMX, or RMX)	Section IV. Mixed-Use and Commercial Districts
Commercial Districts (CMS, CC, CR, CG, CH, or CRC)	Section IV. Mixed-Use and Commercial Districts
All Other Districts	Not Applicable

Subareas within the Tower District are also regulated by the Apartment House Overlay (AHO) zoning designation, which allows multifamily development without ground-floor commercial where it would otherwise be required, along with other AHO requirements.



SECTIONS IN EACH CHAPTER (names same as Development Code)

- A. Purpose
- B. Uses
- C. Density and Massing
- D. Site Design
- E. Facade Design

SOURCES OF CONTENT (noted in blue italic text)

- Original TDDG text.
- Proposed alteration/adaptation of original text.
- Development Code references for consistency and ease of use.
- New text proposed by consultant.



APPROACH (rationale behind this draft)

1. Follow outline and section names in Development Code
2. Adhere to original TDDG and Development Code content as much as possible.
3. Clarify critical TDDG and Development Code provisions if ambiguous.
4. Make original Guidelines into Standards where critical to the design character of Tower District.
5. Add new “best practices” where incomplete.
6. Anticipate that some project proposals will qualify for streamlined approvals pursuant to State law.

(State streamlining allows qualifying housing projects to follow a ministerial path using objective standards, free from subjective interpretations and discretionary decision-making.)



COMPATIBILITY (within a project and within neighborhood context)

- Create Standards when important and can be made objective.
- Relate materials, roofs, and other key elements to other parts of project and adjacent neighbors.
- Address architectural style, while recognizing that defining all aspects of a style is elusive and would be overly prescriptive.

