This Community Design Overlay draft was prepared by Daisy Allen, a UCLA Urban Planning graduate student, on behalf of Los Angeles Council District 11, based on a series of community stakeholder meetings. Please send all comments and questions regarding this document to Daisy at: daisyeallen@gmail.com. The public comment period extends from 4.9.12 to 5.4.12. This document will be revised based on public comments and the final version will be presented at a meeting following the public comment period.

Contents

I. Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 3
   A. Downtown Playa del Rey Setting and Motivation for Community Design Overlay ..................... 3
      1. Current Zoning .............................................................................................................................. 5
   B. Goals and Objectives ......................................................................................................................... 5
   C. Design Principles ............................................................................................................................... 5
   D. Relevance to other Plans .................................................................................................................. 6
 II. Administrative Procedures.................................................................................................................... 7
   A. Project Thresholds ............................................................................................................................ 7
      1. Downtown Playa del Rey CDO Project .......................................................................................... 7
      2. Exemptions .................................................................................................................................... 7
   B. Project Applications .......................................................................................................................... 8
      1. Procedures for Director’s Sign-off and Permit Clearances ........................................................... 8
   C. Landscaping Quality Assurance ......................................................................................................... 8
   D. Enforcement ..................................................................................................................................... 8
 III. Design Guidelines and Standards...................................................................................................... 8
   A. Site Planning ...................................................................................................................................... 8
      1. Building Orientation ...................................................................................................................... 8
      2. Setbacks ........................................................................................................................................ 9
      3. Open Space ................................................................................................................................. 9
   B. Parking and Access .......................................................................................................................... 11
      4. Circulation ................................................................................................................................... 11
      5. Surface Parking ........................................................................................................................... 12
      6. Parking Structures ....................................................................................................................... 12
8. Through Pedestrian Access .......................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

C. Architectural Detailing and Articulation ....................................................... 13
9. Ground-floor Façade Articulation ............................................................ 13
10. Massing and articulation of upper stories .............................................. 14
11. Roof Lines ............................................................................................ 14
12. Exterior Surface Materials ................................................................. 14
13. Awnings and canopies ....................................................................... 15
14. Ground Floor Lighting ....................................................................... 15

D. Appurtenances .................................................................................... 16
15. Security grilles .................................................................................. 16
16. Utility and Service areas / Mechanical Equipment ............................ 16
17. Fencing and Walls ............................................................................. 17

E. Landscaping and Hardscape ................................................................. 9
18. General Landscaping—Location and Materials ................................. 9
19. Landscaping Parking Lots and Structures ........................................ 10
20. Street trees ....................................................................................... 10

F. Signage .............................................................................................. 17
21. General—All Signs ........................................................................... 17
22. Wall Signs ........................................................................................ 17
23. Projecting Signs (a.k.a. Pedestrian, Blade Signs) ............................... 18
24. Awning or Canopy Signs .................................................................. 19
25. Other Signs ...................................................................................... 20
26. Multi-tenant Buildings ..................................................................... 19
27. Monument Signs ................................................................................ 19

G. Resource Protection ............................................................................ 20
28. Designing with Sensitivity to Ballona Wetlands ................................. 20
I. Introduction

The Downtown Playa del Rey Community Design Overlay (CDO) provides guidelines and standards for development projects on properties within the CDO boundaries depicted in Figure 1. The area covers all properties along Culver Boulevard between Nicholson Avenue and the beach. The intent of the CDO is to provide design guidance and direction to enhance the visual identity, commercial viability, safety, walkability, appearance and enjoyment of Downtown Playa del Rey. The accompanying Q Conditions codify the guidelines presented in this document.

Figure 1. Playa del Rey CDO Boundaries.

A. Downtown Playa del Rey Setting and Motivation for Community Design Overlay

Playa del Rey is a beach community nestled between the ocean and the Ballona wetlands (Figure 2). What is now Playa del Rey began life as the mouth of the Los Angeles River, until the river shifted south to Long Beach and left behind a lagoon, saltwater wetlands, and a low-lying floodplain. In the 1800s, this floodplain was the southwestern corner of the 15 square mile Rancho La Ballona. In 1902, the land was developed as a commercial area and resort and renamed “Playa del Rey” (the King’s Beach). 100 lots were sold, and many people visited the resort on the Los Angeles Pacific electric trolley line. Beginning in the 1920s, real estate interests in the area shifted from commercial development along Culver Boulevard to the construction of tract homes on the bluffs overlooking downtown Playa del Rey.
After the initial commercial boom, the commercial area on Culver Boulevard has not expanded upwards or outwards, although businesses and buildings have come and gone.

Figure 2. Culver Boulevard, Playa del Rey.

1. Parking and Traffic Problems

Downtown Playa del Rey, which encompasses Culver Boulevard extending from Nicholson Avenue to the beach, is just a few blocks long but serves a vital purpose as a gathering place for this community. Unfortunately, this stretch of Culver Boulevard is also a major route for commuters from south bay cities. In fact, this road is classified as secondary highway by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. As a result, most car traffic coming through downtown Playa del Rey does not stop. Additionally, there is a need for more parking options in this area. Businesses are suffering, and there has been little commercial development in this area.

2. Community Design Overlay as a Partial Solution

Those that live and work in Playa del Rey would like this downtown to feel more like a destination than a highway strip-mall. Due to the road classification as secondary highway, community stakeholders are not able to implement traffic-calming strategies or provide increased on-street parking. However, there are other issues on Culver Boulevard that can be addressed. The urban form is not currently conducive to pedestrian activity; signage and building access are geared towards automobiles. There is limited landscaping and street trees, and limited differentiation between the sidewalk and busy street. There
are some historic buildings, but there is little architectural interest among most newer buildings. There is little connection between the commercial district and the natural assets of the wetlands and the beach. A Community Design Overlay encourages development to meet design guidelines that celebrate the unique features of the area and enhance those features in a way that improves the overall look and feel of this area.

3. Current Zoning

The majority of the properties located within this area are retail in nature with General Commercial Plan Designations and zoning of C4 with development limitations. This zoning allows C2 uses with some limitations, as well as R4 uses. Existing buildings range from 1-3 stories, and contain a mix of multifamily residential buildings as well as neighborhood-scale commercial uses, including: restaurants, small locally-owned retail shops and professional offices. Parcel sizes range from about 2,500 square feet to over 8,000 square feet. Most parcels have a lot depth of at least 100 feet. Present zoning allows for commercial and mixed-use development at floor-area-ratios (FAR) not to exceed 1.0:1 on the north side of Culver Boulevard, and 1.5:1 elsewhere in the CDO area. Buildings can be up to 36 feet high on either side of Culver Boulevard from Nicolson Street to Pershing Drive, and may be up to 45 feet high west of Pershing Drive. Buildings fronting Culver Boulevard vary in current function.

B. Goals and Objectives

The purpose of the Downtown CDO is to ensure that development within the Downtown Playa del Rey area reflects the overall vision of a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly and vibrant commercial district. Downtown Playa del Rey has the potential to serve the shopping needs of Playa del Rey residents and employees, as well as commuters and visitors driving through from south bay cities. Despite Culver Boulevard’s secondary highway classification, this road has the potential to be more pedestrian-oriented. The purpose of the CDO is to create an urban environment where businesses can thrive and community members can gather with improved enjoyment and safety.

The design standards set forth in the CDO are written to be flexible enough to allow and encourage development and redevelopment of the parcels within Downtown Playa del Rey, and strict enough to assure a safe pedestrian environment and quality design for the entire community.

C. Design Principles

The Downtown Playa del Rey CDO is based upon the following principles:

1.) Preservation. Playa del Rey is one of the only southern California beach communities that maintained a relaxed, small-town, “Main Street” feel while more intense development has proceeded elsewhere. New development along Culver Boulevard should respect this unique aspect of Playa del Rey and seek to maintain this quaint beach town quality while at the same time serving to revitalize businesses.

2.) Context. Design Guidelines and Standards provide regulatory flexibility to allow project applicants to
take cues from the environment, historical precedent, and physical site data. Successful developments consider the context in which they are located and therefore help reinforce a positive identity for the Downtown district. In the case of Playa del Rey, new design should relate to the nearby Ballona Wetlands as well as the beach. Discretionary review will continue to allow for creative architectural features and landscaping that are reflective of the Playa del Rey context.

3.) Pedestrian Activity. Good building and site design are integral to a thriving and active pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district. By facilitating an active street interface in new buildings, design guidelines play an essential role in encouraging pedestrian activity, invigorating commercial uses and creating a safe environment. Architectural and landscape detailing that can be appreciated at pedestrian levels can help improve the appeal and identity of the Downtown area.

4.) Eclectic Compatibility. The Downtown Playa del Rey area features a mixture of development types, including: office buildings; small retail; restaurants; and multifamily residential. The design of such structures is influenced by use, development requirements, lot size, access, and unique site constraints. Also, buildings were constructed during a variety of historical periods in a variety of styles, and this eclectic mix of architecture adds character to the community. New development should maintain a basic consistency and compatibility within and between development projects, which can be achieved through consideration of setbacks, façade articulation, landscaping, and sign programs. However, multiple architectural styles should be allowed to maintain the eclectic feel of Culver Boulevard.

**D. Relevance to other Plans**

This community is part of the Westchester/Playa del Rey Community Plan area, and is represented by the Westchester/Playa del Rey Neighborhood Council, the West LA Planning Commission, and City of Los Angeles Council District 11. This CDO serves to implement the Urban Design provisions of the Westchester-Playa del Rey Community Plan. The Urban Design chapter of the Community Plan explains that for commercial areas, “the emphasis is on the provision and maintenance of the visual continuity of streetscapes and the creation of an environment that encourages pedestrian and economic activity.” In order to achieve this objective, the Community Plan suggests that design guidelines should be written for Culver Boulevard and enforced through a Community Design Overlay. A number of development (“Q”) conditions were assigned to properties along Culver Boulevard when the Westchester/Playa del Rey Community Plan was updated in 2004. Zoning designation [Q]C4-1D refers to properties on the north side of Culver Boulevard between Nicolson Street and Vista del Mar. Zoning designation [Q]C4-1VL refers to all other properties fronting Culver boulevard between Nicolson Avenue and the beach.

**Table X. Development Conditions on Culver Boulevard Parcels per Ordinance 175981 Effective 7/3/04.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Condition</th>
<th>[Q]C4-1VL (south side)</th>
<th>[Q]C4-1D (north side)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All buildings shall be located with their front wall within five (5) feet of the Lot</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>line adjoining Culver Boulevard, except that a larger setback not to exceed fifteen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) feet shall be permitted if all areas between the front wall of the building and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the public right-of-way are developed with walkways, courtyards, outdoor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seating, or other pedestrian amenities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All buildings shall have their primary ground floor pedestrian entrance from</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culver Boulevard.

All buildings shall have their primary ground floor pedestrian entrance facing Culver Boulevard. If the front wall of the building is set back more than five feet from the front property line, some type of pedestrian amenity(s) shall be provided in the front of the building, such as a walkway, a courtyard, outdoor seating area, etc.

Residential uses shall be prohibited on the ground floor.  

The existing Height District D Limitations provisions are retained from Ordinance #167,988 of 1992 as follows: no building or structure shall exceed 37 feet in height; and the maximum FAR for the area shall not exceed 1.0:1 as defined in Section 12.21.1 (A,5 and B,4) of the LAMC.

All areas of the site not developed with structures, parking areas, walkways or other pedestrian amenities shall be attractively landscaped.

Pole signs and illuminated architectural canopy signs shall be prohibited.

Exterior security grilles or permanently affixed security bars, or roll-down grilles that conceal storefront windows shall be prohibited.

These Q conditions represent a small portion of building characteristics that may be regulated through a Community Design Overlay. This document builds on these Q conditions with more specific guidelines, standards and Q conditions regarding private building design on Culver Boulevard.

II. Administrative Procedures

A. Project Thresholds

General regulations pertaining to the function and administration of Community Design Overlay Zones citywide are addressed in Section 13.08 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). Section 13.08 C.2 of the LAMC defines a project within a CDO boundary. Consistent with that Section, the following project definition and exemptions apply to the Downtown Playa del Rey Community Design Overlay District specifically:

1. Downtown Playa del Rey CDO Project

The erection, construction, addition to, or exterior alterations to, any building or structure within the boundary area of Downtown Playa del Rey CDO, including all signs, canopies/awnings, façade alterations, the addition of roof equipment, and landscaping.

2. Exemptions

A project does not include the following: (a) construction that consists solely of interior remodeling, interior rehabilitation or repair work; (b) alterations of, including structural repairs, or additions to any existing building or structure façade that does not front a public street, and in which the aggregate value of the work, in any one 24-month period, is less than 50 percent of the building or structure’s replacement value before the alterations or additions, as determined by the Department of Building and Safety. (The Exemption does not apply if the alterations or additions are to any exterior wall fronting a public street.)
The CDO is applicable to all projects located within the Downtown Playa del Rey CDO boundary area—regardless of the proposed or existing use (residential, commercial, industrial).

All Projects within the Downtown Playa del Rey CDO boundary area shall comply with the design guidelines and standards of this CDO.

B. Project Applications

All Downtown Playa del Rey CDO projects not eligible for a Director’s Sign-off require the submittal of an application, referred to as a “Design Overlay Plan,” which includes plans and materials as defined in Section 13.08 C 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. The Director of Planning may require additional documents or materials as deemed necessary. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, projects will be reviewed by the Director of Planning for compliance with these design guidelines and standards.

1. Procedures for Director’s Sign-off and Permit Clearances

Pursuant to Section 13.08 E 1 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code the following projects may be approved with only a Planning Department sign-off if they comply with all the provisions of the CDO: Signs, Awnings and Canopies, Landscaping totaling less than 20 square feet of ground area, and the addition of roof equipment.

C. Landscaping Quality Assurance

Prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy, a Landscape Architect (or professional responsible for landscape design) shall submit a letter certifying that the landscaping can be maintained as designed. This letter shall be submitted to the Department of City Planning and maintained in the project case file.

D. Enforcement

The Department of Building and Safety is responsible for enforcing the provisions included in this document, as well as the associated zone change ordinance, pursuant to Section 91.6202 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

III. Design Guidelines and Standards

Unless otherwise noted, guidelines apply to all projects in the Downtown Playa del Rey CDO boundary area. Red text indicates standards associated with existing Q conditions. Red highlighted text indicates standards associated with proposed Q conditions.

A. Site Planning

1. Building Orientation

Comment [DA3]: Final version of CDO will have accompanying drawings and photographs illustrating guidelines and standards.
GUIDELINE: BUILDING ORIENTATION
Buildings should be sited to facilitate pedestrian access from Culver Boulevard. Accommodating public use at the ground floor encourages pedestrian activity. Developments should not face inward and should have entrances which meet the sidewalk at grade on Culver Boulevard to provide street orientation consistent with pedestrian-oriented environment.

STANDARD: BUILDING ORIENTATION
All Buildings should have a ground floor and the primary ground floor building entrance should be oriented towards Culver Boulevard. All Projects should provide a convenient pedestrian entrance directly accessible from the sidewalk at the ground floor for each business which fronts on Culver Boulevard, even when rear or side public entrances are provided. Businesses and residences located on corners must have their primary pedestrian entrance facing Culver Boulevard.

2. Setbacks

GUIDELINE: SETBACKS
Encourage an inviting pedestrian environment and provide for streetwall continuity by locating buildings so they front the Culver Boulevard, and encourage active public uses, such as additional street trees, outdoor seating, kiosks, forecourts and arcades.

STANDARD: SETBACKS
For projects with non-zero front-yard setbacks, at least half of setback area must be landscaped or devoted to pedestrian-friendly uses such as pathways or outdoor seating.

B. Landscaping and Hardscape

3. Open Space —Location and Materials

GUIDELINE: OPEN SPACE LOCATION AND MATERIALS
Open space and landscaping should be inviting, provide shade within the public realm, screen unattractive areas, and enhance architectural detailing through the thoughtful and careful placement. Pedestrian plazas, green space, pocket parks and open space shall be encouraged. Outdoor open spaces, to the greatest extent possible, should be oriented towards Culver Boulevard. All open spaces are expected to be well defined, integral components of the site design. Building site landscaping can present an attractive ground plane to pedestrians while screening building bases, service areas, parking structures, and surface parking lots. Landscaping should be arranged to highlight building entries, soften building masses, provide scale to site development, and define lot edges. Planters are an effective means to provide landscape where parkways do not exist and add variety and visual interest to the streetscape. Landscaping locations can be chosen to complement buildings or enhance storefront design.

Note: Landscaping may include plant materials such as trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials, annuals, as well as rocks, water features, sculpture, art, or paving materials.
STANDARD: OPEN SPACE LOCATION AND MATERIALS
All open spaces where people can gather, such as parks, courtyards, and the Ballona Wetlands, should have a direct pedestrian path from Culver Boulevard.

STANDARD: OPEN SPACE LOCATION AND MATERIALS
All areas of a site not occupied by buildings, driveways, parking areas, or pedestrian amenities shall be landscaped at site entrances, along walkways, and adjacent to buildings and parking lots. Landscaping consisting of small trees, planter boxes or tubs of flowers shall be provided, where feasible. Plants should not obstruct the pedestrian right-of-way nor create inappropriate visual or physical barriers for vehicles or pedestrians.

STANDARD: OPEN SPACE LOCATION AND MATERIALS
Landscaping such as planter boxes and street trees should be provided between the sidewalk and the street. This landscaping serves as a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

STANDARD: OPEN SPACE LOCATION AND MATERIALS
Low-water (drought-tolerant, and including native) plants should be used.

STANDARD: OPEN SPACE LOCATION AND MATERIALS
An automatic irrigation system should be installed within landscaped areas of more than 10 square feet. A drip irrigation system is recommended.

4. Street trees

GUIDELINE: STREET TREES
Trees should be utilized to define a street, add character and scale to adjacent buildings and create a pleasant environment and interest along the street for pedestrians. When shade trees are utilized, they can help lower the temperature, provide a measure of protection for pedestrians, help buffer traffic noise, and filter pollution.

STANDARD: STREET TREES
For new building projects and those involving alteration to greater than 50% of the exterior walls, trees with appropriate tree grates shall be planted in the adjacent public right-of-way, at a ratio of 1 tree for every 25 feet of lot length, to the satisfaction of the Urban Forestry Division, Bureau of Street Services, Department of Public Works or to the California Department of Transportation. Tree grates shall be of a uniform color with a bright decorative design used on Culver Boulevard. Trees along Culver Boulevard should all be the same tree species in order to foster continuity.

Note: Landscaping in public right-of-way, extending beyond private property, must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

5. Landscaping Parking Lots and Structures

GUIDELINE:
Enhance parking areas by providing landscaping that shades, buffers, and conceals unattractive views of parking.

Note: Standards apply to areas that include six or more parking stalls and shall be in addition to, and consistent with, the requirements set forth in Sections 12.21. A.6(g), A.6(h), and 12.21. A.6(i) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

**STANDARD:**
A five-foot landscaped and/or masonry wall buffer shall be located between parking areas and the property line wherever a surface parking lot abuts the public right-of-way or an R zone property.

**STANDARD:**
A minimum of 5% of the total area of surface parking shall be landscaped, including one tree for every 4 parking spaces evenly dispersed throughout the lot. Tree species should be a variety with a large canopy.

### C. Parking and Access

#### 6. Circulation

**GUIDELINE: CIRCULATION**
Wherever possible, retail and community-oriented uses should be located to allow easy access by pedestrians. Vehicle access and loading areas should be well-defined and located where there will be minimal physical or visual impact on pedestrians and on the flow of traffic, or adjacent uses.

**STANDARD: CIRCULATION**
Walkways for pedestrian access shall be provided between parking areas and the Project. Pedestrian walkways should be illuminated for comfort and security and landscaped. Narrow back door entrances through service areas, kitchens or long hallways are not appropriate.

**STANDARD: CIRCULATION**
Whenever possible, vehicular entrances shall be located off of a side street or rear alley, in order to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts along Culver Boulevard. Loading areas shall be located on the rear or side entrance of the structures for minimum visibility and where there will be minimal negative impact on pedestrians and the flow of traffic. Pedestrian “drop off” areas located at the street shall not impede foot traffic or sidewalks.

**STANDARD: CIRCULATION**
Where side street or alley access is not available for vehicular access, not more than one twenty (20) foot wide driveway shall be provided per hundred (100) feet of building unless the Department of Transportation determines that there is no other alternative to the location of the garage or parking lot entrances.
7. Bike Parking

GUIDELINE: BIKE PARKING
Culver Boulevard is located just off a major bike path. Dedicated bike parking should be made available so bikers can more easily patronize businesses.

STANDARD: BIKE PARKING
For new building projects with over 50 feet of lot length fronting Culver Boulevard, dedicated bike parking must be provided at a ratio of 2 spaces for every 50 feet of lot length. Bike parking should not encroach into the public right of way and should instead be provided within building setbacks at the front or side of the Project.

8. Surface Parking

GUIDELINE: SURFACE PARKING
Surface parking for all buildings should be located to the rear of buildings if possible. Pedestrian access from parking areas into buildings, as well as from parking areas to the street should be provided. If parking is located along the side of a building, it should have minimal visual impact upon the frontage facing the street and not detract from the pedestrian experience.

STANDARD: SURFACE PARKING
Surface parking lots shall not be located between the front property line and the primary building/storefront on Culver Boulevard. Surface parking shall be located to the rear of all structures if vehicular access is available to the rear of the parcel either from an alley or a public street. If rear parking is not possible, surface parking lots should be located to the side of the Project to allow the Project building to abut the public street.

STANDARD: SURFACE PARKING
Whenever a surface parking lot abuts a public street, a landscaping buffer should be provided between the sidewalk and parking lot, according to the landscaping guidelines set out in this document.

9. Parking Structures

GUIDELINE: PARKING STRUCTURES
Parking structures should be integrated into or at least be visually compatible with other structures in the Project. If a parking structure faces Culver Boulevard, it must relate to the surrounding buildings in materials, color, and other elements. Openings in the parking structure facades should resemble openings of the principal structure and comply with Guidelines and Standards regarding Articulation. Parking structures should also receive landscape treatment to eliminate any conditions of the structure that might inhibit attractive views and should comply with the landscaping and screening requirements contained in the Open Space section.

STANDARD: PARKING STRUCTURES
The design of parking structures should be compatible with the surrounding buildings through a consistency in building materials, color, design or pattern. Automobiles shall be screened from the public view, as seen from a public street.

**STANDARD: PARKING STRUCTURES**  
Where parking structures directly front Culver Boulevard, parking structures must be wrapped with retail uses.

**STANDARD: PARKING STRUCTURES**  
Wherever a parking structure abuts, or is directly across an alley or public street from any residential zone or residential use, the wall facing such residential use or zone should conform to the following standards:

a. Solid decorative walls or decorative baffles to block light and deflect noise shall be installed along the sides of the structure which adjoins residential zones or uses.

b. Solid spandrel panels a minimum of 3-feet-6-inches in height shall be installed at the ramps of the structure to minimize headlight glare.

c. Garage floors and ramps shall be constructed with textured surfaces to minimize tire squeal.

### D. Architectural Detailing and Articulation

#### 10. Ground-floor Façade Articulation

**GUIDELINE:**
The ground floor of buildings fronting Culver Boulevard should be detailed to enhance the pedestrian experience. Heighten visual interest and enhance pedestrian orientation by incorporating three dimensional elements and material variation into the ground-floor façade of buildings. These elements and variations include: changes in building materials, texture and color; generously sized transparent display windows; arcades, canopies, and awnings; cornices; other details.

**STANDARD:**
Windows and doors should allow views into building interiors and/or to merchandise displays; transparent, non-reflective glass shall be used.

**STANDARD:**
For all buildings, one or more of the following vertical elements: columns, pilasters, indentations, storefront bays, material treatment, landscaping, shall be employed on every building façade.

These elements shall be in addition to required variations on upper floors. These elements should be substantially visible, as viewed from across the street. When the design element creates a deviation from the wall plane, such as by indentation, the depth difference from the wall face should be measured between six inches and two feet. Variations consisting of a change in building materials should involve a minimum depth or projection from the wall plane of one and one-half inches.
11. Massing and articulation of upper stories

GUIDELINE:
Upper stories should be setback from the street in order to maintain the pedestrian scale. Upper stories should enhance the public realm through rhythmic, three dimensional variations in massing and building form, including the use of recessed windows, towers, columns, cornices, and changes in the wall plane. Minimize building mass impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods by allowing for ventilation, light, and privacy.

STANDARD:
Projects above three stories shall be setback one-third of the building length beginning at the second story. Upper stories must provide at least one three-dimensional variation per story above. These variations can be combined to extend along several stories. Thus, for example, a three-story project might provide a projection from the wall plane that extends across two stories.

STANDARD:
On lots more than 25 feet wide, regular articulation of upper stories is required.

These variations shall be in addition to any required variations along the ground-level façade. Variations consisting of a change in building materials should involve a minimum depth or projection from the wall plane of one and one-half inches. These variations should be substantially visible, as viewed from across the street.

Note: Projections into the public right-of-way, extending beyond private property, must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

12. Roof Lines

GUIDELINE: ROOF LINES
Roof lines provide visual interest and functionality. A new building should be designed with reference to surrounding or adjacent buildings. Continuity or consistency can be achieved by maintaining the height of adjacent roofs, parapets, and cornices, and by avoiding clashes in style, scale and materials. A variety of new architecture can be developed within this established line and still maintain consistency with the adjacent buildings. Compatibility of new with existing roof lines should be considered.

STANDARD: ROOF LINES
Buildings shall be designed to maintain consistency in scale, proportion, and style by identifying the common horizontal element (e.g., roof or parapet, cornice, storefront height) found on neighboring structures and maintaining consistency by using a similar architectural pattern. Severe roof pitches that create prominent out-of-scale building elements shall be avoided.

13. Exterior Surface Materials

GUIDELINE: EXTERIOR SURFACE MATERIALS
Building materials and colors are integral to the aesthetics of a building affect the visual appearance, scale and proportion of a building. Large expanses of the same building material or color detract from
the aesthetics of a building. Exterior materials and color schemes should be selected in relation to the overall design of the building and should be simple, harmonious and blend in with adjacent structures. A limited number of materials and colors should be adequate for the building facade. Accent colors, where used, for architectural detailing, trim, storefront, window sashes, doors and frames should be coordinated. Colors should be coordinated with all the elements of the facade such as signs, awnings, and storefronts. The intent of this guideline is to encourage individuality in architectural expression within the context of the overall appearance of the block face and the district.

**STANDARD: EXTERIOR SURFACE MATERIALS**
Building colors and materials should be appropriate to the architectural style of the building, and should be compatible with surrounding buildings and the natural environment.

**STANDARD: EXTERIOR SURFACE MATERIALS**
Principal exterior façade materials may not include one-way glass or reflective metallic elements.

14. Awnings and canopies

**GUIDELINE:**
Where appropriate, use awnings or canopies to define the public realm of the sidewalk, provide shelter and shade, and enhance the building façade by adding variation, color, and horizontal rhythm. Awnings and canopies reinforce a pedestrian scale and add a comfortable sense of enclosure to outdoor seating and other active public uses.

**STANDARD:**
Size and placement of awnings and canopies should enhance the building’s overall frame, detailing, and rhythm. Placement should correspond to the location of a storefront or entrance.

**STANDARD:**
Awnings and canopies shall be constructed of high quality, durable, fade-resistant, and fire-retardant material, and new awnings may not be constructed without an accompanying maintenance plan.

Note: Projections into the public right-of-way, extending beyond private property, must obtain proper approval from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

15. Ground Floor Lighting

**GUIDELINE: GROUND FLOOR LIGHTING**
Lighting should be incorporated into the design to accentuate architectural features, building entries, and to provide a safe environment for pedestrian activity. Outdoor lighting in front of buildings provides a continuous secure stretch for pedestrians at nighttime.

**STANDARD: GROUND FLOOR LIGHTING**
Buildings used at nighttime shall provide outdoor lighting facing Culver Boulevard that illuminates, at a minimum, the building entrance(s) and signage.
STANDARD: GROUND FLOOR LIGHTING
All lighting should be full cut-off and shielded to prevent glare to pedestrians and adjacent properties.

E. Appurtenances

16. Security grilles

GUIDELINE: SECURITY GRILLES
Provide storefront security as needed without obscuring storefront windows and detracting from the pedestrian environment along the sidewalk. Minimize the presence of security grilles and bars as visible from Culver Boulevard.

STANDARD: SECURITY GRILLES
External security grilles shall not be affixed to any facade abutting Culver Boulevard or other public street, excluding rear alleys.

STANDARD: SECURITY GRILLES
Premises should employ non-barrier (alarm or sensor) theft-deterrent systems where possible. If such security systems are not feasible, interior security grilles or vandal-proof glazing that is resistant to impact should be used on any storefronts abutting any public street.

17. Utility and Service areas / Mechanical Equipment

GUIDELINE: UTILITY AND SERVICE AREAS
Improve the pedestrian environment along the sidewalk and minimize visual blight by screening unsightly equipment and locating it away from public streets and other public rights-of-way, including pedestrian walkways and parking areas.

STANDARD: UTILITY AND SERVICE AREAS
Utilities, storage areas, trash containers, air conditioning units, fire alarms, and similar equipment shall be placed to the rear of the site or underground when feasible. Otherwise, structures housing such elements shall be screened with landscaping or designed in a way as to be as inconspicuous as possible.

STANDARD: UTILITY AND SERVICE AREAS
Trash storage bins shall be located within a gated, covered enclosure and screened so as not to be viewed from the public right-of-way.

STANDARD: UTILITY AND SERVICE AREAS
Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened with materials that are architecturally integrated to the building.
18. Fencing and Walls

GUIDELINE: FENCING AND WALLS
Support an open and accessible physical environment by minimizing visual barriers and the enclosure of outside space. Locate and design any necessary fencing in a manner so as not to detract from the quality of the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk adjacent to Culver Boulevard.

STANDARD: FENCING AND WALLS
Fences and walls should not front Culver Boulevard, unless required by the Los Angeles Municipal Code or included as part of an outdoor seating area.

STANDARD: FENCING AND WALLS
No fence or wall abutting a public street shall be taller than 42 inches.

STANDARD: FENCING AND WALLS
Chain-link fences and barbed wire are prohibited.

STANDARD: FENCING AND WALLS
Wall and fencing materials and design should be decorative and coordinate with the structures on the site.

STANDARD: FENCING AND WALLS
The planting of climbing plants is encouraged along the width of fencing and walls.

STANDARD: FENCING AND WALLS
Enclosures for sidewalk dining should utilize low walls, open fencework or planter boxes.

F. Signage

19. General – All Signs

GUIDELINE: ALL SIGNS
Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the Boulevard, through context-sensitive signs. Ensure that signage design is suitable in terms of location, layout, and styling. Minimize sign clutter and emphasize pedestrian-scale instead of auto-scale signage.

STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
Signs shall complement buildings with respect to style, design, materials, and colors.

STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
The exposed backs of all signs visible from a public right-of-way should be suitably finished and maintained.

Comment [DA4]: Note: these signage guidelines and standards will override the City of LA Signage Ordinance where there is a conflict between the two documents. I have noted specific areas where the two documents are different.

Note: the LA sign ordinance includes requirements for temporary signs so I do not see a need to include standards for temporary signs here.
STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
Signs must be associated with businesses within the building or adjacent building. The following signs are prohibited: off-site signs, billboards, pole signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, flashing, moving, or blinking signs, digital signs, inflatable devices, and roof signs on two-story or taller buildings.

STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
Illuminated signs are allowed but must not be flashing and must have glare carefully controlled through the use of full cut-off lighting. If signs are internally illuminated, lighting sources must be concealed.

STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
In order to prevent the pedestrian environment from getting cluttered, projecting, awning, and placard signs must not encroach more than 2 feet into the public right-of-way.

STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
Also to prevent clutter, there should be a limit of one sign for every 10 feet of storefront, for a maximum of three total signs per business.

STANDARD: ALL SIGNS
There should be a maximum of 10% building frontage covered in signage.

Note: None of these provisions shall prohibit a building address from being clearly identified so the parcel can be found by emergency personnel.

Note: Sign illumination shall be limited pursuant to Section 91.6205.13 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Note: Within 90 days of closing a business, any related signs shall be removed and replaced with blank panels or painted out, pursuant to Section 91.6205.9.4 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Note: Temporary signs shall be permitted pursuant to Section 91.6216 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Comment [DA5]: Note: this is different from the LA sign ordinance in the following ways:
1. The LA sign ordinance prohibits all roof signs
2. The LA sign ordinance allows pole signs, illuminated architectural canopy signs, inflatable devices, flashing/blinking signs.

Comment [DA6]: This is different from the LA sign ordinance which only allows 1 foot.

Comment [DA7]: This is different than the LA Sign Ordinance, which requires: The combined sign area of all signs for a building must not exceed 4 sf for each foot of street frontage. Our proposed standard is MORE STRICT than the LA sign ordinance.

Note: this includes mural signs per the LA sign ordinance but the ordinance may be amended to allow murals to cover a larger area. If people are interested, we can add an exception to this standard for murals.

Comment [DA8]: This is different from the LA sign ordinance which only allows projecting signs if businesses have at least 50 feet of street frontage.

Note: the LA sign ordinance also puts the following additional restrictions on projecting signs:
1. Maximum 25 square feet plus an additional 1.5 square feet for each foot of street frontage over 50 feet – up to total 300 sf projecting sign.
2. Height cannot be lower than 8 feet above the sidewalk and cannot extend above the top of a wall.
3. Projecting signs must be a minimum of 7.5 feet from interior lot lines and 15 feet from other signs.
4. The Plane of the sign face must be within 15 degrees of perpendicular to the fact of the building.

If people would NOT like these restrictions to apply on Culver Boulevard or would prefer different restrictions, they should be written into the CDO.

Comment [DA9]: This is different from the City of LA signage ordinance requirement (1 foot).

GUIDELINE: PROJECTING SIGNS
Projecting signs are encouraged but must be properly maintained. Minimize sign clutter and ensure that signage design is suitable and well proportioned to the structure and building façade.

STANDARD: PROJECTING SIGNS
Each business or tenant shall be permitted one projecting sign as long as that tenant has frontage on Culver Boulevard. This sign shall be in addition to wall, awning or canopy signs and may protrude a maximum of 2 feet into the public right-of-way.

20. Projecting Signs (a.k.a. Pedestrian, Blade Signs)
STANDARD: PROJECTING SIGNS
Each business that is located above the first floor may have a projecting sign on the ground level if there is direct exterior pedestrian access to the second floor business space.

21. Awning or Canopy Signs

GUIDELINE: AWNING OR CANOPY SIGNS
Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while providing the benefit of awnings or canopies upon buildings. Minimize sign clutter and ensure that signage design is suitable and well proportioned to the structure, building façade, and awning.

STANDARD: AWNING OR CANOPY SIGNS
In lieu of a wall sign fronting Culver Boulevard, each business or tenant shall be permitted one awning sign, to be located over the building or business entrance. An additional awning sign is permitted if the premise abuts another street, alley, or public parking area.

Note: Awnings can be provided in addition to wall signs provided that the awning does not include signage.

22. Multi-tenant Buildings

GUIDELINE: MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS
Enhance the visual quality of the primary commercial streets by providing signage coordination and consistency on the facades of large buildings.

STANDARD: MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS
Multi-tenant buildings shall submit a sign plan to the Planning Department that designates the style and design of all signs on the building. Sign plans should establish rules of placement and size.

STANDARD: MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS
Signs on a multi-tenant building shall be placed at the same uniform elevation to create visual continuity.

23. Monument Signs

GUIDELINE: MONUMENT SIGNS
Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the primary commercial streets by limiting monument signs to only those circumstances where wall signs are not easily viewed from Culver Boulevard.

STANDARD: MONUMENT SIGNS
Monument signs shall only be permitted for developments where wall signs and building facades do not front Culver Boulevard, or where tenant spaces are primarily entered through a courtyard, or if sited where parking areas abut Culver Boulevard. In these circumstances, individual business signage on a monument sign should be no greater than 10 square feet in size and the top of the monument sign shall be not more than 8 feet above sidewalk grade.
24. **Other Signs**

**GUIDELINE: OTHER SIGNS**
Promote the identity and success of individual businesses while enhancing the visual quality of the Downtown, through the appropriate placement, size, and quantity of additional signage.

**STANDARD: OTHER SIGNS**
One portable menu board sign may be permitted in the public right-of-way for eating establishments, bakeries, florists, and similar businesses that have as their primary sales perishable good, provided that all of the following conditions are met:
- i. The sign is removed at the end of each business day.
- ii. The sign’s dimensions do not exceed two feet by three feet.
- iii. The sign does not protrude more than 2 feet into the public right-of-way and does not interfere with pedestrian movement or wheelchair access.
- iv. The sign has a weighted base capable of keeping the sign upright in moderate wind.
- v. The sign is not illuminated.
- vi. All required sign permits have been secured from the Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services. A permit may be necessary to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way.

G. **Resource Protection**

25. **Designing with Sensitivity to Ballona Wetlands**

**GUIDELINE: BALLONA WETLANDS**
Design projects to celebrate and enhance a connection to the Ballona Wetlands.

**STANDARD: BALLONA WETLANDS**
For projects located on the north side of Culver Boulevard: if possible, provide direct pedestrian access to the Wetlands from the building. Otherwise, provide signage or literature instructing building visitors how to access the wetlands.

For projects located on the north side of Culver Boulevard: provide views of the wetlands from the building through either outdoor seating, viewing decks or views from north-facing windows.

For projects located on the south side of the building: if the building is taller than one story, consider providing viewing deck(s) or balconies from which building occupants can view the wetlands. Provide signage or literature instructing building visitors how to access the wetlands from the building.

New development should preserve existing views of the beach and wetlands from viewing decks and balconies.