

# SHERMAN OAKS



## COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

# GUIDELINES

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### THE SIX GUIDELINES

The **VISION** Committee proposes six Guidelines that will enhance livability and set a foundation for residents, government, businesses, and developers to collaborate for the benefit of the community. The Guidelines make it easier for developers to work with our community. Sherman Oaks understands that working together for the entire community's good will help achieve needed housing and commercial space while retaining the unique qualities that make our community so desirable.

Guideline 1 – Protect R1 Single-Family Residential Neighborhoods

Guideline 2 – Increase Accessible Open Space

Guideline 3 – Encourage Visual Community Integration – Multifamily

Guideline 4 – Enhance the Public Realm – Commercial & Mixed Use

Guideline 5 – Establish Public/Private Parking Structures

Guideline 6 – Address Unique Densification Opportunities in Sherman Oaks

### OUR GUIDELINES WORK FOR ALL OF SHERMAN OAKS

We support the concept of affordable housing incentives and their higher-density mandate, and realistically believe that higher-density housing will become the norm across all areas of Sherman Oaks and Los Angeles. Our six Guidelines then become even more critical because they create well-designed housing while enhancing the livability and lifestyle of our community. The color legend of *Figure 1* details the four types of zoning in Sherman Oaks to help everyone understand how higher-density housing could impact our entire community in the future – and why our Guidelines must apply across this entire Sherman Oaks community.



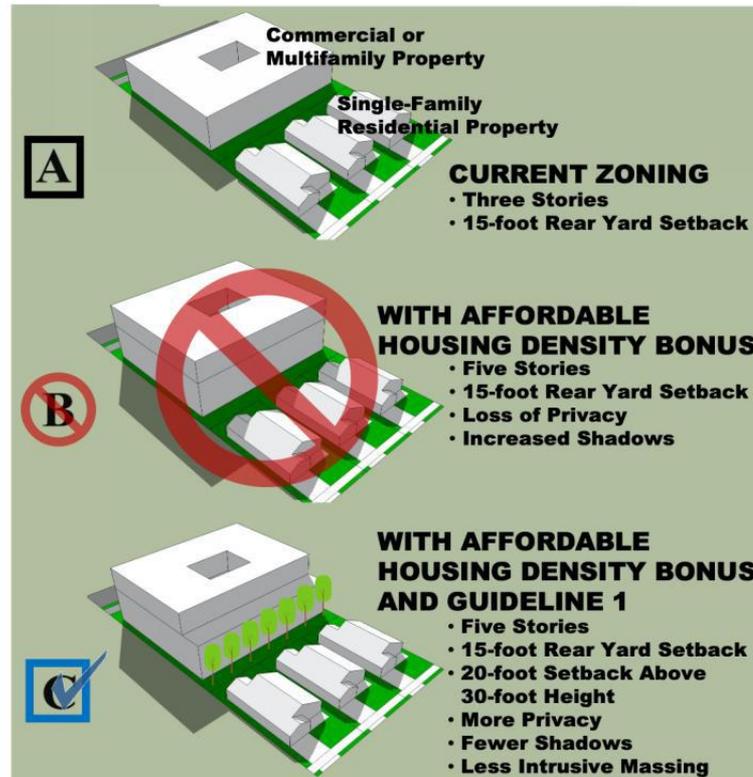
*Figure 1.* Our Guidelines Benefit Both Mandated Higher-Density Housing and All Housing Across Sherman Oaks

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### GUIDELINE 1 – PROTECT R1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

*Any commercial or multifamily property with a building higher than the currently allowable 30 feet should step back from a residential rear or side yard by a 45-degree angle, thus minimizing visual intrusion upon single-family residential housing.*

This **VISION** Guideline protects single-family residential properties that abut commercial or multifamily properties, as shown by the example panels in *Figure 2*. We also encourage planting large trees along shared property lines. Recommended trees include Fern Pine (*Podocarpus gracilior*), Buddha's Belly Bamboo (*Bambusa ventricosa*), Clumping Giant Timber Bamboo (*Bambusa oldhamii*), Brush Cherry (*Syzygium paniculatum*), and Brisbane Box (*Lophostemon confertus*). Everyone benefits because new higher-density projects will not physically overwhelm single-family residences, helping to encourage good-neighbor attitudes for all.



*Figure 2.* Panel A Shows Shadowing with Current Zoning and Panel B with Density Bonus, While Panel C Shows Reduced Shadowing with the Guideline's 45-degree Setback

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### **GUIDELINE 2 – INCREASE ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE**

*Higher commercial or multifamily buildings should require larger percentages of publicly enhancing open space.*

Higher density requires more than minimum open space. Building higher to increase density can promote livability if done correctly, as shown on the left in *Figure 3*. Alternately, building higher with minimal open space creates light wells that limit light and air at lower levels and confronts communities with massive walls of building, as shown on the right in *Figure 3*. Such intelligent open space planning will establish better living environments for all residents even as density increases.



*Figure 3. Building Higher with More Open Space Does Not Create Negative Impacts (left), While Building Higher with Minimal Open Space Creates Negative Impacts (right)*

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### GUIDELINE 2 – INCREASE ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE [CONTINUED]

**VISION** understands that taller buildings can make sense and minimally impact communities if they include significant open space. Low-rise buildings that sprawl can create dark wells and negatively impact communities with walls of buildings. High-rise buildings may more easily maintain significant open space and minimally impact communities, as illustrated in *Figure 4*.



*Figure 4.* Adding Floors to a High-Rise Apartment in a Park-Like Setting May More Positively Impact Communities Than Adding Floors to a Low-Rise Apartment in a Traditional Setting

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### **GUIDELINE 3 – ENCOURAGE VISUAL COMMUNITY INTEGRATION – MULTIFAMILY**

*Multifamily residential buildings should have significant cutouts and recesses to visually expand the public realm and encourage community integration.*

**VISION** encourages visual community integration by ensuring that residential buildings integrate with the existing community fabric. Stepped, cutout, and recessed building walls fronting the street should be encouraged because they integrate residential projects into the existing community and visually expand the public realm, as shown in *Figure 5*. Courtyards open to the street view will further enhance the landscaped beauty of Sherman Oaks.



Figure 5. Panel A Shows Frontage Wall with Current Zoning and Panel B with Density Bonus, While Panel C Shows Stepped Wall Better Integrating with Community

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### **GUIDELINE 4 – ENHANCE THE PUBLIC REALM – COMMERCIAL & MIXED-USE**

*Commercial mixed-use development projects should recognize the need to protect and enhance the local public realm.*

**VISION** understands that some commercial housing projects, depending on their location and size, should address the public right-of-way. Large projects might warrant a community open space or plaza as a community benefit for accepting density increases. Smaller projects should provide gathering spaces, walkable arcade-type areas, or other community spaces. Such enhancements and amenities turn development projects into community assets, rather than detriments.

Development projects that do not provide such public amenities should contribute to a fund for Sherman Oaks' ongoing efforts to enhance our public realm. The fund would be used to enhance local public-realm projects, as demonstrated by the examples in *Figure 6*.



*Figure 6. Development Projects Offer an Effective Method to Fund Public Realm Improvements, including Streets, Pathways, Right-of-Ways, Open Spaces, and Public and Civic Buildings and Facilities*

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### **GUIDELINE 5 – ESTABLISH PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARKING STRUCTURES**

*Reduced on-site parking should require public/private-funded off-site parking structures, while trip fees for traffic challenges should fund community improvements.*

Projects that are incentivized with reduced parking for tenants and guests offer major cost savings to developers. Therefore, developers should be required to contribute to a community off-site parking structure fund. The City would use the contributed funds to build parking structures in existing local P-zone or commercial areas, as exemplified at the top of *Figure 7*. If a parking structure faces a residential zone, housing units would be encouraged to front the parking structure thus keeping the residential feeling of the street, as shown at the bottom of *Figure 7*.

The City should convince landowners of P-zone properties that they can financially benefit from such developments, as they would become major community benefits. The City should also encourage project developers to establish shuttle services for their tenants to and from remote parking structures.



*Figure 7. Parking Structures Could Be Built in Existing Parking-Zone Areas and Layered with Attractive Street-Facing Facades*

**VISION** further encourages the establishment of trip fees. Development projects that cannot mitigate existing traffic-congested areas should be assessed a trip fee that goes into a community fund for the building of parking structures and other mitigation measures. These fees would be spent for local community improvements, such as parking and traffic improvements or local parks. These and other mitigating measures can make a more aesthetic and better functioning community.

## Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks

### GUIDELINE 6 – ADDRESS UNIQUE DENSIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES IN SHERMAN OAKS

Certain Sherman Oaks areas offer unique densification opportunities that may receive height exemptions while still following all other **VISION** Guidelines.

**Sepulveda as a Grand Boulevard** – Sepulveda Boulevard’s west side overlooks the Sepulveda Basin and is clearly separated from properties on the east side. This unique area is the only one where we recommend high-rise buildings, as shown in *Figure 8*. While meeting all other guidelines, high-rise buildings would also employ 40-foot landscaped setbacks with double rows of London Plane trees (*Platanus acerifolia* Columbia) along Sepulveda, to create a Grand Boulevard.

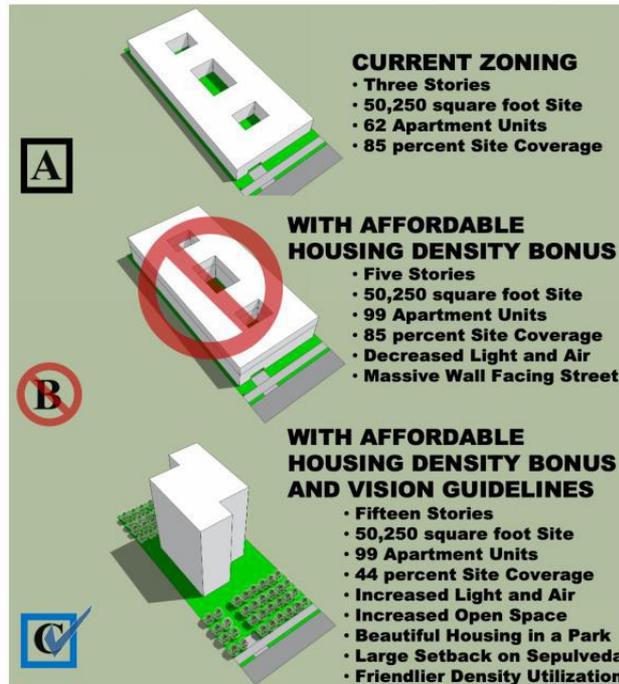


Figure 8. Panel A Shows a Building Under Current Zoning and Panel B Under a Density Bonus, While Panel C Shows an Alternate High-Rise Concept with Maximum Open Space

**Ventura Boulevard Specific Plan Increased Height Limit** – Ventura Boulevard is unique and can contribute to increased density. We recommend revising the building code to allow a uniform 45-foot height limit to the roof of the last occupied floor, measured from the highest ground point adjacent to the building, and allow shaded canopy structures above rooftop open space. The SONC PLUM Committee must approve all residential and commercial projects in the Specific Plan.

## **Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks**

### **SUMMARY AND POSITIVE GUIDELINE EXAMPLES**

We summarize our six higher-density housing *VISION* Guidelines below, along with their benefits to our community and the environment.

#### **Guideline 1** – Protect R1 Single-Family Residential Neighborhoods

*Any commercial or multifamily property with a building higher than the currently allowable 30 feet should step back from a residential rear or side yard by a 45-degree angle, thus minimizing visual intrusion upon single-family residential housing.*

Community Benefit – New higher-density projects will not physically overwhelm single-family residences and will help encourage a good-neighbor attitude.

Environmental Benefit – Fewer aesthetic, noise, light, glare, and land use impacts will occur because of buffers between higher to lower density. Step backs will create better buffer between commercial and residential land uses, diminishing intrusion on those more vulnerable.

#### **Guideline 2** – Increase Accessible Open Space

*Higher commercial or multifamily buildings should require larger percentages of publicly enhancing open space.*

Community Benefit – Increased open space will establish better living environments for all residents or occupants even as density or intensity increases, and also will allow the ability to create open-space networks.

Environmental Benefit – Fewer aesthetic, land use, and recreation impacts will occur because of more active and passive open space and less site coverage.

#### **Guideline 3** – Encourage Visual Community Integration – Multifamily

*Multifamily residential buildings should have significant cutouts and recesses to visually expand the public realm and encourage community integration.*

Community Benefit – Courtyards open to the street view will further enhance the landscaped beauty of Sherman Oaks.

Environmental Benefit – Fewer aesthetic impacts will impact residents or occupants because all projects must adhere to certain basic design precepts.

## **Guidelines to Enhance Livability in Sherman Oaks**

### **SUMMARY AND POSITIVE GUIDELINE EXAMPLES [continued]**

#### **Guideline 4** – Enhance the Public Realm – Commercial & Mixed-Use

*Commercial mixed-use development projects should recognize the need to protect and enhance the local public realm.*

Community Benefit – Public enhancements and amenities will turn higher-density developments into community assets, rather than detriments.

Environmental Benefit – Better aesthetics and public services because greater public realm investment will lessen burdens on the public sector. This enhancement will establish new public areas.

#### **Guideline 5** – Establish Public/Private Parking Structures

*Reduced on-site parking should require public/private-funded off-site parking structures, while trip fees for traffic challenges should fund community improvements.*

Community Benefit – These and other resultant mitigating measures will make a more aesthetic and better functioning community.

Environmental Benefit – Better aesthetics and more locally available parking for residents, businesses, and visitors.

#### **Guideline 6** – Address Unique Densification Opportunities in Sherman Oaks

*Certain Sherman Oaks areas offer unique densification opportunities that may receive height exemptions while still following all other **VISION** Guidelines.*

Community Benefit – Higher buildings will result in less site coverage and will allow more landscaping that faces the public realm.

Environmental Benefit – Better aesthetics, increased transit usage, and more open space will result from localized higher density.

**We hope that residents, elected officials, businesses, and local leaders join us in continuing to make Sherman Oaks one of our city's most desirable communities.**