



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY  
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

# Proposed Building Design Standards

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Committee on Ordinances

Department of Planning and Development

February 4, 2026



# Agenda

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- Introductions
- Proposals for Small Scale Residential
- Proposals for Apartment/Mixed Use Buildings
- Discussion



# Staff Introductions



# Comprehensive Plan

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OBJECTIVE LU9: BUILT ENVIRONMENT Promote design excellence and historic preservation through appropriate land controls.

Strategy F. Establish an ad hoc committee to advise on the creation of design regulations. The committee should include developers, architects and designers, and community stakeholders



# Design Standards Committee

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## Design

## Professionals

Charlotte Lipschitz

Zoe Mueller

Virginia Branch

Mark Rapp

Joel Vanderweele

Tom Beresford

## Developers

Babawale Jenyo

Dan Hornby

Harry Angevine

Sharon Morris

Sam Albert

## Preservation

## Professional

Marisa Brown

## Neighborhood

## Advocates

Rochelle Lee

Kari Lang



# Committee Overview

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## Mission:

To advise Providence's Department of Planning and Development on new design standards for development in residential and neighborhood commercial areas that aim to improve design quality without unnecessarily increasing the cost of new development or length of time for a project to be reviewed.



# Committee Overview

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## Structure:

- Six discussion-based meetings from June - October 2025
- Goal: new standards proposed at CPC hearing in Fall 2025, then to City Council

## Meeting Topics:

- ✓ 6/4 - Defining our Design Challenges & the Role of Design Standards
- ✓ 6/18 - Small Scale Residential Design
- ✓ 7/16 - Apartments & Mixed-Use Design
- ✓ 7/23 - Apartments & Mixed-Use Design continued
- ✓ 8/20 - Refining Proposed Standards
- ✓ 10/15 – Final Discussion of Apartments & Mixed-Use Design



# Small Scale Residential

## Key Challenges

Many new infill developments are:

- Not effectively engaging the street, negatively impacting the pedestrian experience
- Using poor-quality materials on facades without important detailing



# Small Scale Residential

## Details Matter

Examples of new infill developments:

- Entrance, façade, window, porch details
- Elevation of entrance



# Small Scale Residential

## Existing and Proposed Standards

### Entrance

- A dwelling shall have a **primary entrance that is visible from the public right of way** and located either on the façade facing the front lot line, or within 20 feet of the façade facing the front lot line.
- The primary entrance shall have a **maximum elevation of five feet above the ground** directly below the entrance.
- For any entrance on the front or side of a building, **when using pressure treated wood** on stairs, porches, railings, landings, and screening, the **wood shall not be left unfinished**. It may be painted, stained with an opaque finish, or clad in a finish quality wood, vinyl, or composite material.
- The **area under porches**, stairs or landings on the front or side of a building shall be **screened by wood or simulated wood lattice** or other opaque building material.

# Small Scale Residential

## Existing and Proposed Standards

### Façades and Other Building Faces

For all types of housing:

- **Windows, entrances, porches, or other architectural features are required** on any façades to avoid the appearance of blank walls. Building façades shall not contain blank wall areas that exceed 12 linear feet.
- There shall be a minimum of **15% transparency on each façade** and is calculated on the basis of the entire area of the façade. On all other building faces, there shall be a minimum of 10% transparency or the maximum allowed by building code, whichever is less. Transparency is calculated on the basis of the entire area of each building face.
- When **vinyl siding** is used, the siding shall only be used in a **clapboard, shingle, or board and batten design**.
- For all **windows**, when using vinyl clapboards, shingles, or board and batten siding, there shall be a **sill, and window trim** of at least 3.5” in width for side and head casings.
- When using vinyl clapboards, shingles, or board and batten siding, **corner boards** of at least 4.5” in width shall be used at all outside corners. This shall not apply to woven shingle corners.

# Apartments & Mixed-Use

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## C-2 District Design Standards - Existing

### Existing Standards

- **Façades** (distance from streets, details)
- **Building Entries** (location and dimension)
- **Fenestration** (windows and doors)
- **Roofs** (roofline design)
- **Building Materials** (certain materials not allowed on the ground floor for durability)
- **Build-To Percentage** (how much of a building facade fronts on a street)
- **Multi-Tenant Retail Centers** (site design, building design cohesiveness)
- **Ground Floor Uses** (residential and parking not allowed close to the street on certain main streets in C-2 zones)



# Apartments & Mixed-Use

## Key Challenges

Many new infill developments are:

- Not effectively engaging the street, negatively impacting the pedestrian experience
- Using poor-quality materials on facades without important detailing



# Apartments & Mixed-Use

## Details Matter

- Ground-level engagement
- Sensitive use of materials
- Building proportions



# Apartments & Mixed-Use

## Proposed Standards

### Land Development Project Process

- For all land development projects, a **staff-level design review session is required** to evaluate compliance with design standards and suggest improvements that could be made. The staff person conducting the review is required to file a report with the CPC.



# THANK YOU

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City of Providence

