

Building Heights

I Really Like It!

I Like It But With Some Changes

Neutral

I Don't Like It. Needs Improvement - How?

I Really Don't Like It - Why?

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to variations in construction cost, multiple design factors should also be considered when thinking about building height limits. The following topics describe a number of design factors that influence building heights in absolute terms (e.g. different floor heights for different uses) and subjective terms (e.g. perception of building height). As with all design choices, there are no right answers. The best design solutions will be the ones that are context-sensitive to Napa and supported by the community's needs and preferences including transitions that respect surrounding historic buildings and open space areas.

CURRENT REGULATIONS

- Downtown Commercial District** 40'
 - with design review Up to 50'
 - if 40% of floor area is housing Up to 68' (6 stories)
- Oxbow (Tourist Comm.) District** 40'
 - with a pitched roof 48'
- Residential-Office District** 35' (3 stories)

(Surrounding area height limits are 35 feet just south of Downtown; 40 feet along the Jefferson Street corridor, 40-48 feet in the Soscol Mixed Use area and 30 feet (2.5 stories) in the low density residential neighborhoods.)

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHTS

- Avia Hotel 59'
- Clay Street Garage 43'
- McCalous 43'
- Napa Square 50'
- Riverfront 55'9" (tower = 65')

PROPOSED REGULATIONS

- Downtown Commercial District** 50'
 - 3-5 stories depending on use/design if design standards are provided that provide for transitions by historic landmarks and parks, and other "good design" features such as steps backs.
 - Higher heights to 7-8 stories may be acceptable on certain core downtown site including Soscol frontage sites.
 - if 40% of floor area is housing up to 68' (6 stories)
- Oxbow (Tourist Comm.) District** 40-48'
 - 2-4 stories, depending on use/design acceptable with the possibility to increase height for key projects. Design guidelines should determine whether pitched roofs are still necessary for 48' heights.

Edges (Res.-Office District) 35-40'

- 2-3 stories, depending on use are appropriate in edge transition areas next to sensitive neighborhoods.

FLOOR HEIGHTS FOR DIFFERENT USES

Floor-to-floor height is the measure from the top of the finished lower floor to the top of the finished upper floor. Different uses have different floor-to-floor heights. The following list identifies the average range of floor-to-floor heights depending on use. (See Figures 1 and 2)

- Residential floor-to-floor height: ~8.6 - 10 feet
- Office/Commercial floor-to-floor height: ~12 - 15 feet
- Ground-Floor Retail floor-to-floor height: ~12 - 18 feet

The range of floor-to-floor heights reflects a number of factors that influence the design of new development. These factors are as follows:

- Marketability
- Development Feasibility
- Sustainability



Figure 1: Floor Heights for Different Uses

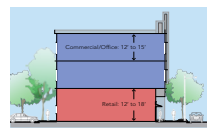


Figure 2: Floor Heights for Different Uses

BUILDING ENVELOPE AND ARTICULATION

The building envelope of any structure is the maximum size and volume of a new development. (See Figure 3)

Façade articulation, trees, and architectural detail can mitigate the perceived mass of a building. (See Figure 4.)

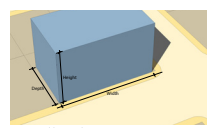
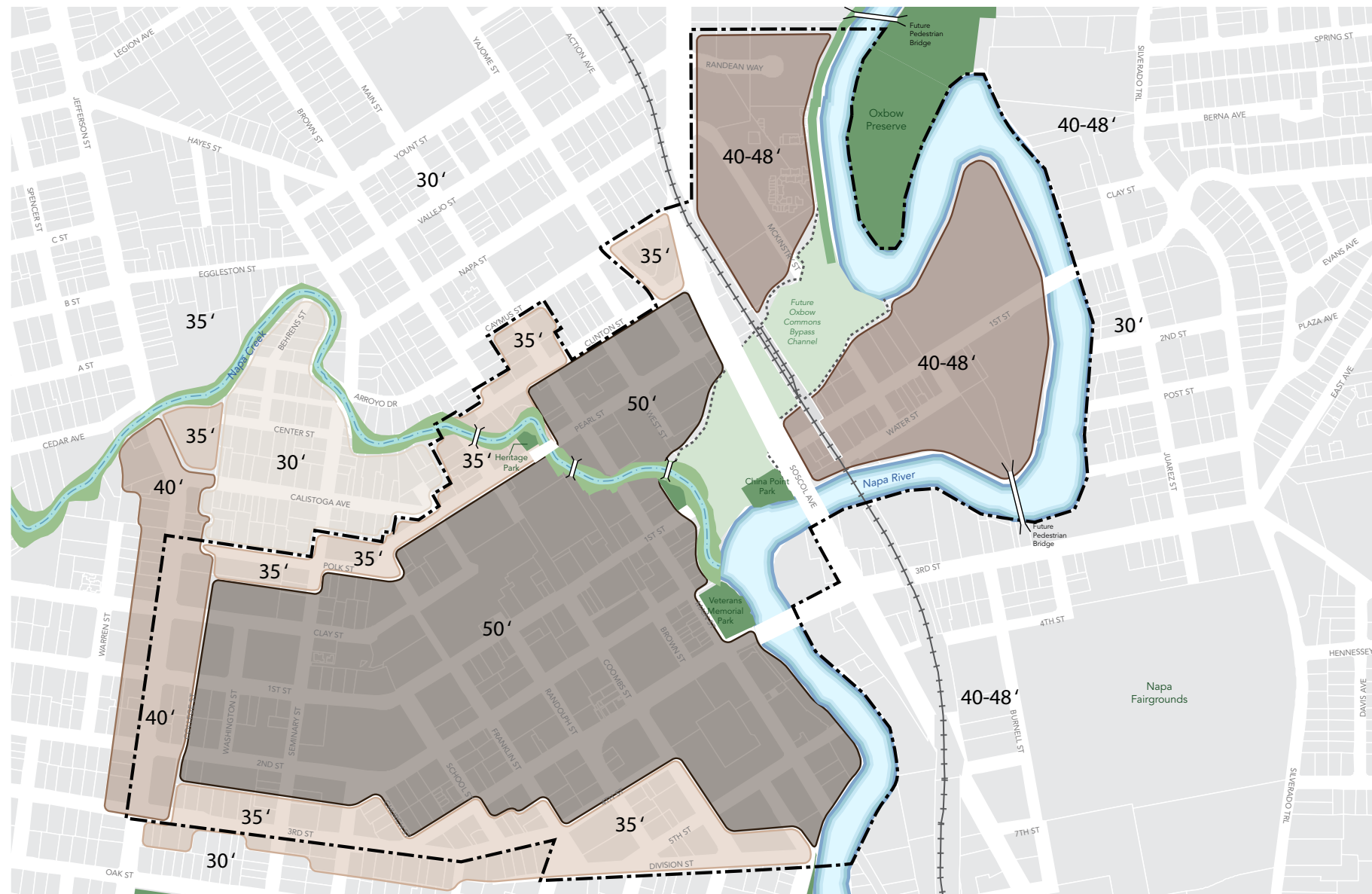


Figure 3: Building Envelope



Figure 4: Building Articulation



SCALE

The scale of a building is evaluated with respect to its location and size in relation to other contextual elements. Therefore, it refers to an apparent size rather than its actual size. Scale is also applied to how a structure is perceived in relation to a human being (i.e. "human" or "pedestrian" scale). (See Figure 5.)

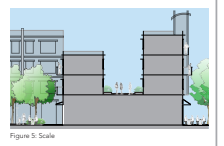


Figure 5: Scale

SETBACKS

Setbacks refer to the horizontal distance from the property line to the face of a building. (See Figure 6.)



Figure 6: Setback and Landscaped Setback

STEPBACKS

A setback is a setback located on the upper floors of a building, typically to reduce the bulk of a building or to provide outdoor floor space. (See Figure 7.)



Figure 7: Stepbacks

BUILDING TO STREET RATIO

- Walkable streets have a "sense of enclosure".
- Building height to street width ratio (ie. a combination of buildings and trees that line a street have a minimum height of one-half the width of the public right-of-way, or a 1 to 2 ratio). Upper-story setbacks are not calculated into this ratio.
- First Street: buildings should be at least 30 feet tall since most of the public right-of-ways are 60 feet.
- In a dense, Downtown environment, an appropriate building to street ratio can come close to 1:1. (See Figures 8, 9 and 10)



Figure 8: Street to Building Ratio (Minimum Building Height)

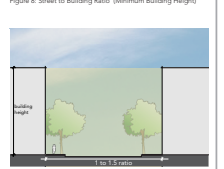


Figure 9: Street to Building Ratio (Moderate Intensity)

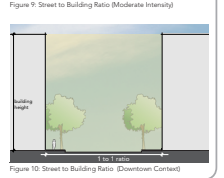


Figure 10: Street to Building Ratio (Downtown Context)