Oriel Window Regulations

Window projections & the pedestrian experience

Presentation to the Portland Design Commission

May 1, 2025

Purpose

Re-establish the city's standards for window projections into the public right-of-way

- BDS Code Guide rescinded March 17, 2023.
- Updated regulations will be incorporated into PBOT's Encroachment Manual (TRN-8.08)

Opportunity for minor updates to:

- Ensure window projections contribute to a comfortable public realm and positive pedestrian experience.
- Avoid continuous cavernous or tunnel-like streetscapes as re-development occurs.
- Prevent buildings from encroaching too far or heavily into the right-of-way, including the consideration of balconies in projections.

D-Street Village Apartments, 3150 SE Division St.

Purpose

CODE GUIDE
BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

TOPIC: **Window Projections Into Public Right-of-Way – OSSC/32/#1**

CODE: **Oregon Structural Specialty Code - 2014 Edition**

RESCINDED: **March 17, 2023 [Rebecca Esau], Director**

REFERENCE: **Chapter 32 – Oregon Structural Specialty Code**

SUBJECT: **Windows Projections into Public Right-of-Way**

QUESTION: 1. Do the provisions for windows specified in Chapter 32 of the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) include all windows projecting over the right-of-way including those supported by a cantilevered floor structure or those carried on brackets or corbels (oriel or bay windows)?

RESPONSE: 1. Yes, Chapter 32 is intended to apply to all window types that may project over the public right-of-way including those supported by a cantilevered floor system or those supported on brackets or corbels.

QUESTION: 2. What are the limitations or standards for windows allowed to project into public right-of-way?

RESPONSE: 2. In cooperation with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Portland Bureau of Transportation, the Bureau of Development Services has adopted the following standards for windows which are allowed to project into public right-of-way including a schedule of all significant characteristics which must be present for a building projection to be considered a window. If a proposed building projection does not comply with this set of requirements, then review falls under the City Encroachment Policy, administered by the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

Standards for windows allowed to project into public right-of-way.

A. Projection. Maximum projection of 4 feet into the right-of-way including trim, eaves and ornament.

B. Clearance. Clearance above grade as defined in Chapter 32, Section 3202.3.2 of the current Oregon Structural Specialty Code. (The 2014 edition of the Oregon Structural Specialty Code states that no projection is allowed for clearances less than 8 feet above grade. For clearances above grade greater than 8 feet, 1 inch of projection is allowed for each additional inch of clearance, provided that no such projection shall exceed a distance of 4 feet.)

C. Area. Maximum wall area of all windows which project into public right-of-way on a wall is 40% of the wall's area.

D. Wall Length. Maximum width of any single window which projects into public right-of-way is 50% of its building wall length.

E. Window Area. Minimum of 30% window area at the face of the projecting window element. Projections greater than 2 feet 6 inches must have windows at all sides, and required side windows must be a minimum of 10% of side walls. When approved through design review, the window requirement for side walls may vary. Side windows must meet the requirements of Table 705.8 of the current Oregon Structural Specialty Code, maximum area of exterior wall openings based on fire separation distance and degree of opening protection. The separation distance is measured from the continuation of the property line. No openings will be allowed within 3 feet of the property line continuation.

F. Width. Maximum width of 12 feet for each projecting window element. When approved through design review, the width may vary provided the area of all windows on a wall which project into public right of way does not exceed 40% of the wall's area and the width of any single projecting window element does not exceed 50% of its building wall's length.

G. Separation. Minimum separation of 12 feet measured from other projecting window elements on the same elevation or plane of wall. When approved through Design Review, required separation may vary provided the area of all projecting window elements on a wall does not exceed 40% of the wall's area and the width of any single projecting window element over the right-of-way does not exceed 50% of its building wall's length.

Encroachment Review

Proposed developments that include projecting window elements exceeding the standards listed above are subject to review under the City of Portland Encroachments in the Public Right-of-Way policy, administered by the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

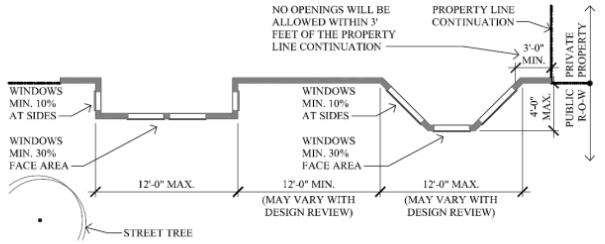

Illustration of Window Projecting Over the Right-of-Way

Rescinded March 17, 2023
Updates June 1, 2005 edition IBC/32/#1
Replaces January 1, 1999 edition

Purpose

OSSC/32/#1
Window Projections into Public Right-of-Way
Page 2 of 3
Rescinded March 17, 2023

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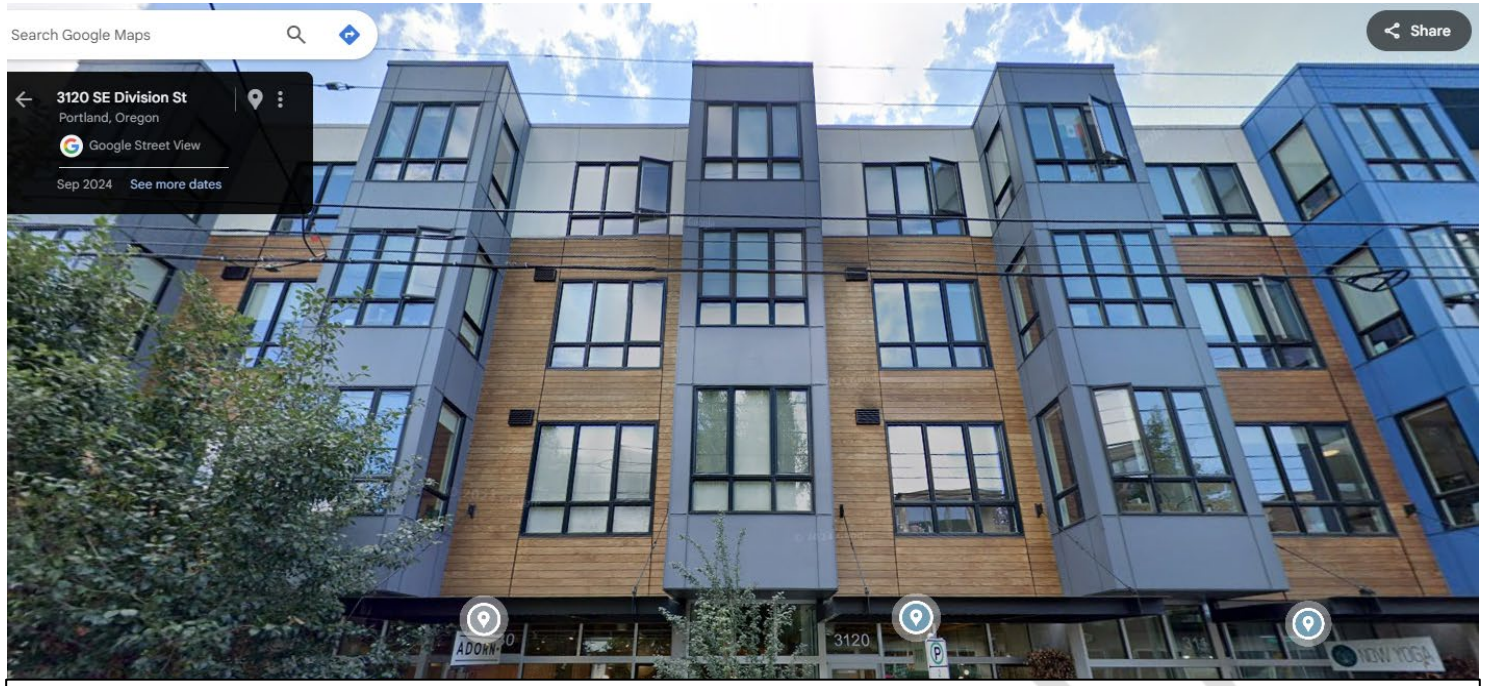

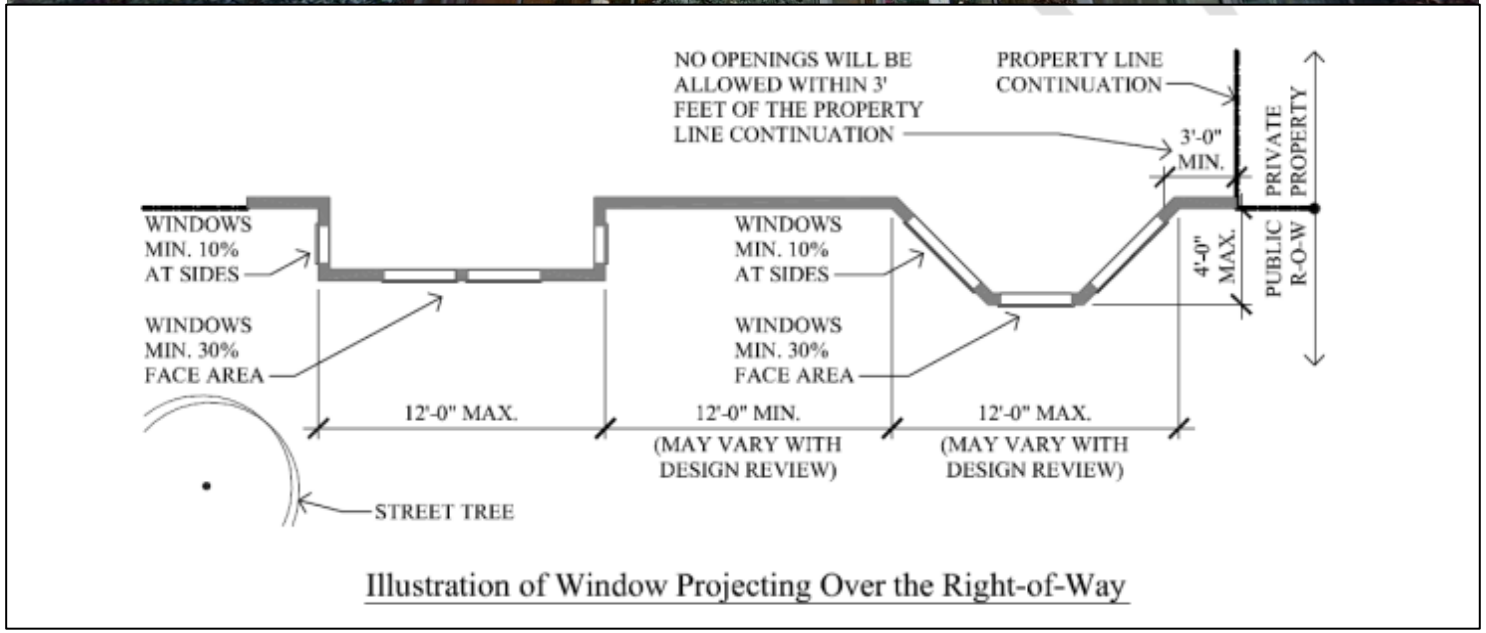

Illustration of Window Projecting Over the Right-of-Way

Purpose – Exception thru Design Review

OSSC/32/#1
Window Projections into Public Right-of-Way
Page 2 of 3
Rescinded March 17, 2023

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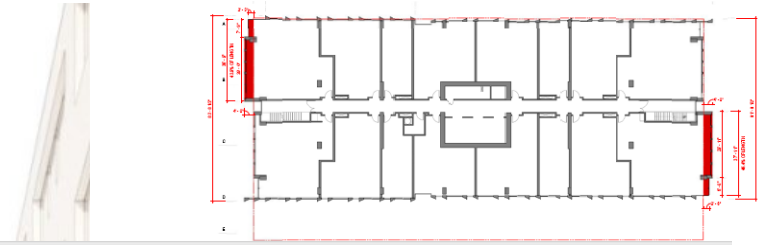
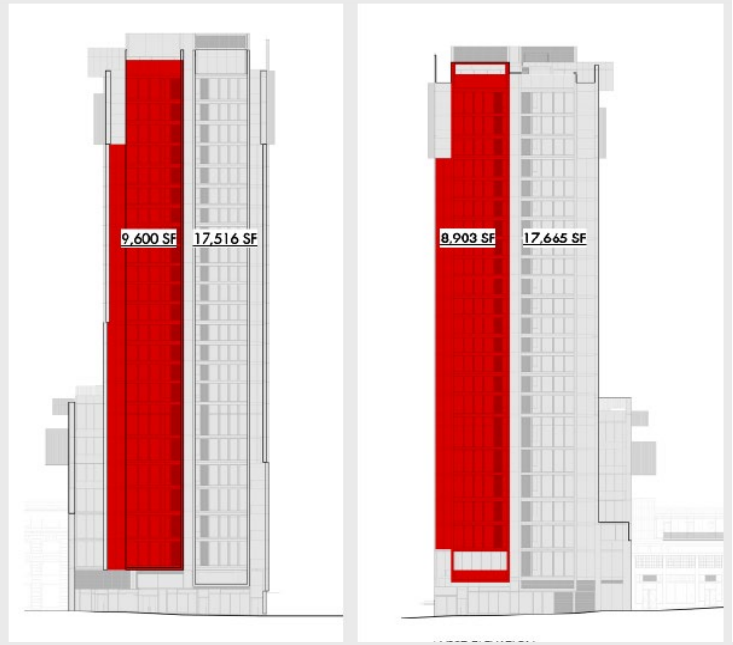
Eleven West: 1102-1116 SW Washington St





Exception to Window Projections into the Right-of-Way (OSSC/32/#1)

To increase the 12' maximum width of window projections to:

- *36'9" along SW 12th (West Elevation), 37'-11" along SW 11th (East Elevation)*
- *To not have required side wall windows for projections greater than 2'-6".*

BDS & PBOT support

- *Better meets DG's C4. Complement the Context of Existing Buildings and C5. Design for Coherency*

Proposal 1:

Link projection distance to frontage zone width

Existing:

Maximum projection of **4 feet** into the right-of-way

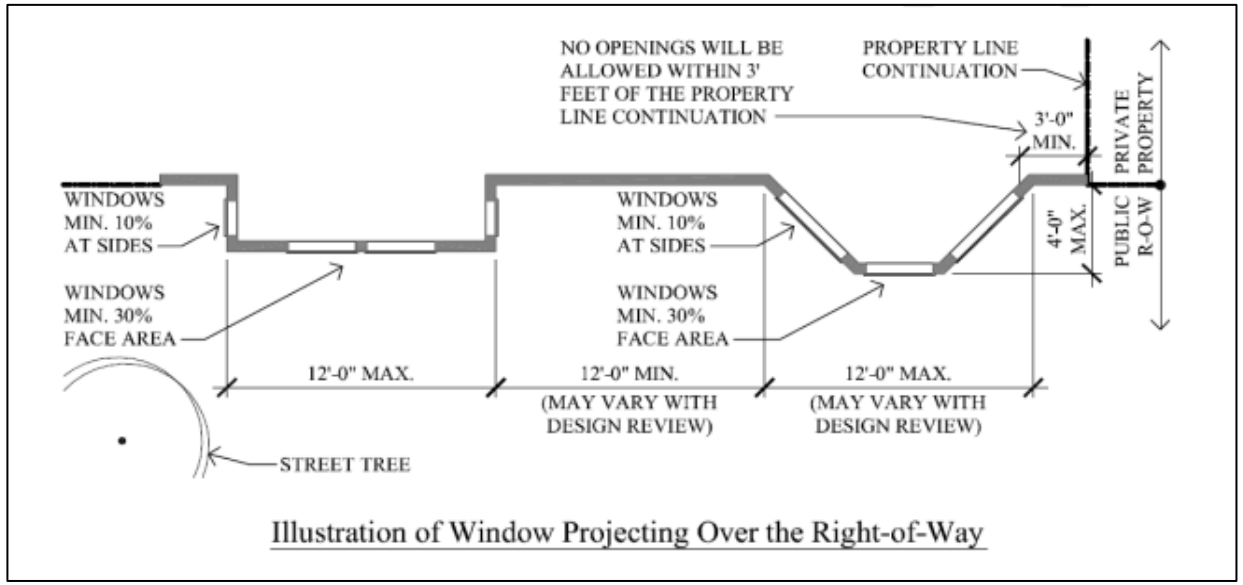


Illustration of Window Projecting Over the Right-of-Way

D Street Village Apartments, 3233 SE Division

Proposal 1:

Link projection distance to frontage zone width

Existing:

Maximum projection of **4 feet** into the right-of-way

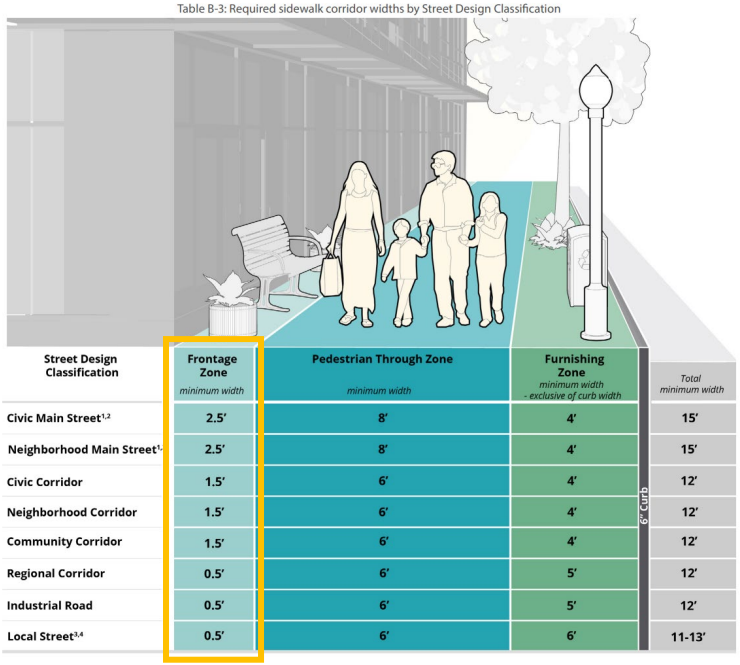


Table B-3: Required sidewalk corridor widths by Street Design Classification

Street Design Classification	Frontage Zone *minimum width*	Pedestrian Through Zone *minimum width*	Furnishing Zone *minimum width - exclusive of curb width*	6" Curb	Total *minimum width*
Civic Main Street[1,2]	2.5′	8′	4′		15′
Neighborhood Main Street[1,]	2.5′	8′	4′		15′
Civic Corridor	1.5′	6′	4′		12′
Neighborhood Corridor	1.5′	6′	4′		12′
Community Corridor	1.5′	6′	4′		12′
Regional Corridor	0.5′	6′	5′		12′
Industrial Road	0.5′	6′	5′		12′
Local Street[3,4]	0.5′	6′	6′		11-13′

Proposed:

Maximum projection equal to width of **sidewalk frontage zone plus 1.5 feet**.

Minimum of 10 feet from curb face

May not extend beyond 4 feet regardless of frontage zone width.

Full text: “Projections may extend a distance equal to the width of the sidewalk frontage zone (as defined by the Pedestrian Design Guide) plus up to 1.5 additional foot into the right-of-way, including trim, eaves, and ornament. A minimum of 10 feet must be maintained between the curb face and the furthest point of the projection, and a projection may not extend beyond 4 feet, regardless of the frontage zone width.”

Proposal 1:

Link projection distance to frontage zone width

Existing:

Maximum projection of **4 feet** into the right-of-way

Functionally:
- 4′ of projection on main streets
- 3′ of projection on most corridors
- 2′ of projection on local streets

Why?

Prevent buildings from encroaching too far or heavily into the right-of-way.

Proposed:

Maximum projection equal to width of **sidewalk frontage zone plus 1.5 feet**.

Minimum of 10 feet from curb face

May not extend beyond 4 feet regardless of frontage zone width.

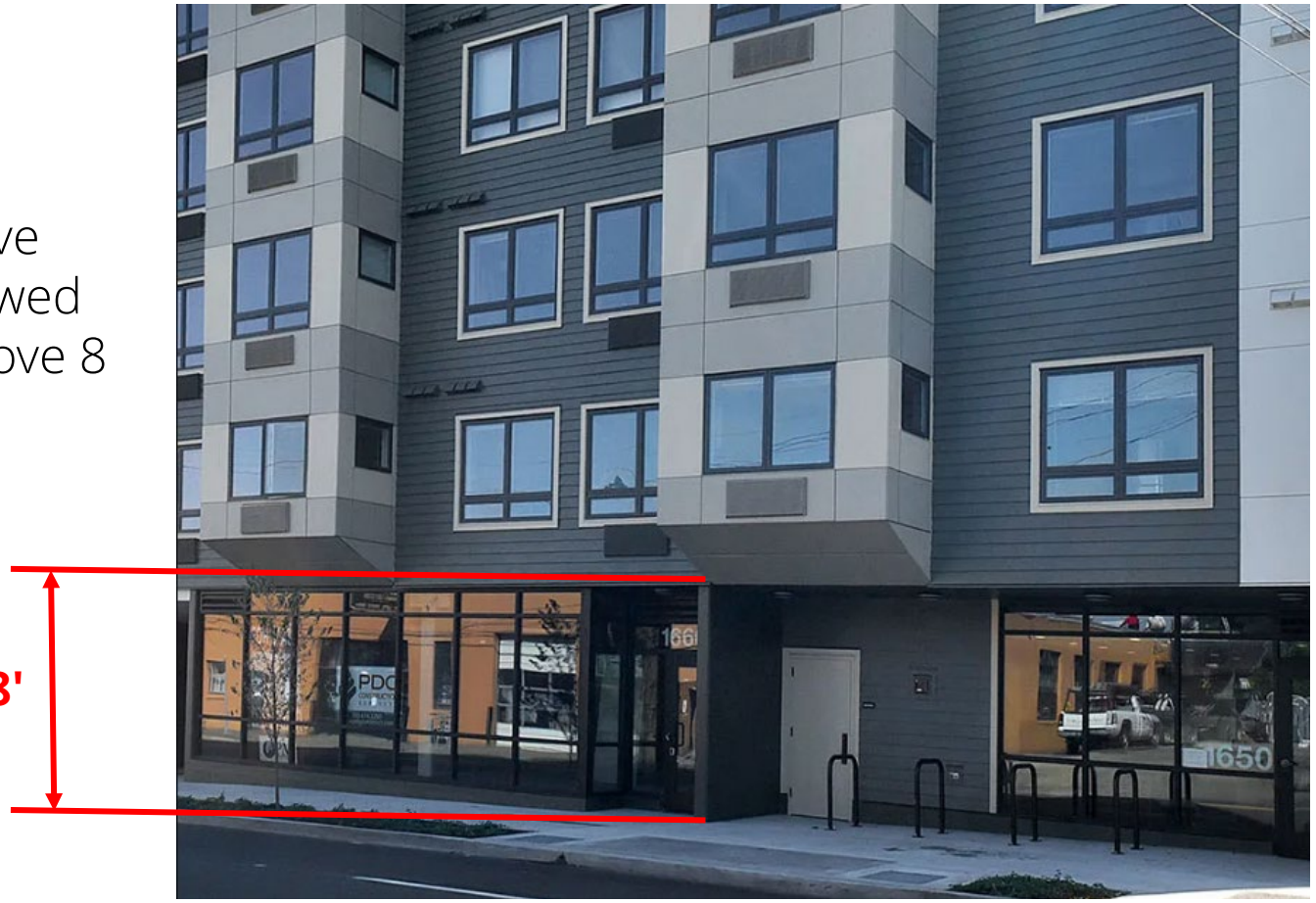
Full text: “Projections may extend a distance equal to the width of the sidewalk frontage zone (as defined by the Pedestrian Design Guide) plus up to 1 additional foot into the right-of-way, including trim, eaves, and ornament. A minimum of 10 feet must be maintained between the curb face and the furthest point of the projection, and a projection may not extend beyond 4 feet, regardless of the frontage zone width.”

Proposal 2:

Increase minimum height for oriel windows, but not balconies

Existing:

Projections are allowed over **8 feet** above grade, with 1 inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 8 feet.



The Morgan, 1650 SE Tacoma St.

Proposal 2:

Increase minimum height for oriel windows, but not balconies

Existing:

Projections are allowed over **8 feet** above grade, with 1 inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 8 feet.

Why?

Sets different minimum heights for balconies and oriels, allowing open projections (balconies) closer to grade.

Proposed:

Balconies: projections allowed over **8 feet** above grade, with 1 inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 8 feet.

Oriel windows: projections allowed over **11 feet** above grade, with 1 inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 11 feet.

Full text: "No projections are allowed into the right-of-way less than 8 feet above grade. Balcony projections are permitted over 8 feet above grade, with one inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 8 feet. Window projections are permitted over 11 feet above grade, with one inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 11 feet."

Proposal 2:

Increase minimum height for oriel windows, but not balconies

Existing:

Projections are allowed over **8 feet** above grade, with 1 inch of encroachment allowed for each additional inch of clearance above 8 feet.

Functionally (in conjunction with Proposal 1):

- Main Streets: 4' balconies at 12' above grade
  4' oriels at 15' above grade
- Corridors: 3' balconies at 11' above grade
  3' oriels at 14' above grade
- Local Street: 2' balconies at 10' above grade
  2' oriels at 13' above grade

Proposed:

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Proposal 3:

Increase proportion of projections that must be windows

Existing:

The minimum window area at the face of the oriel window projection is **30%**

The minimum window area on side walls of the oriel window projection is **10%** for projections >2.5 feet deep.

Kearney Plaza, 930 NW 12th Ave

Proposal 3:

Increase proportion of projections that must be windows

Existing:

The minimum window area at the face of the oriel window projection is **30%**

The minimum window area on side walls of the oriel window projection is **10%** for projections >2.5 feet deep.

Why?

Increases the transparency of projections—more "eyes on the street" and light from buildings at night.

Proposed:

The minimum window area at the face of the oriel window projection is **50%**

The minimum window area on side walls of the oriel window projection is **25%** for projections >2.5 feet deep.

Full text: "The minimum window area at the face of oriel window projections is 50%. Projections greater than 2 feet 6 inches must have windows at all sides, and required side windows must be a minimum of 25% of side walls. When approved through Design Review, the window requirement for side walls may vary. Side windows must meet the requirements of Table 705.8 of the current Oregon Structural Specialty Code, maximum area of exterior wall openings based on fire separation distance and degree of opening protection. The separation distance is measured from the continuation of the property line. No openings will be allowed within 3 feet of the property line continuation."

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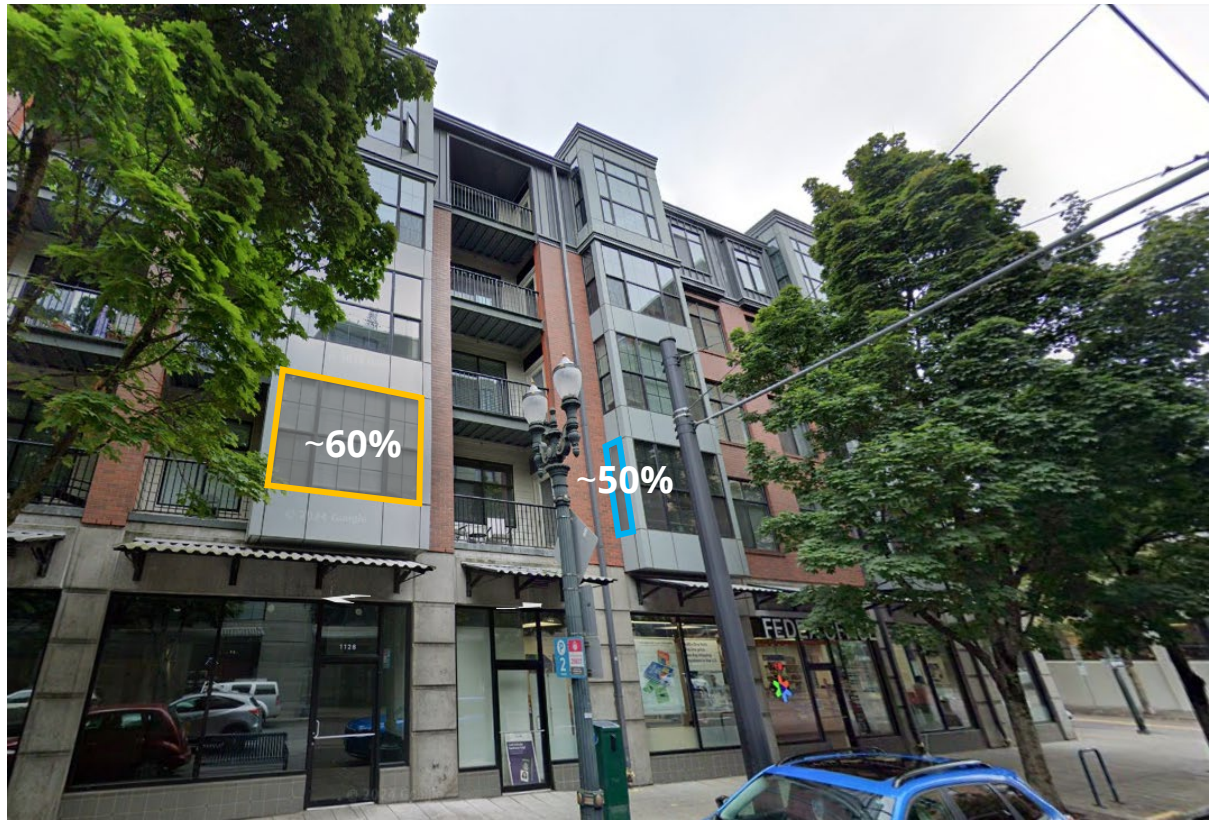

Kearney Plaza, 930 NW 12th Ave

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Proposal 4:

Address adjacent balconies and oriel window projections

Existing:

Maximum width of **12 feet** for each projecting window element.*

*the width of balconies is not specifically addressed. They may be placed between oriels without counting toward the projection width.

Reliable Apartments, 3105 SE Division St.

Division Street Station, 2595 SE Division St

Proposal 4:

Address adjacent balconies and oriel window projections

Existing:

Maximum width of **12 feet** for each projecting window element.*

*the width of balconies is not specifically addressed. They may be placed between oriels without counting toward the projection width.

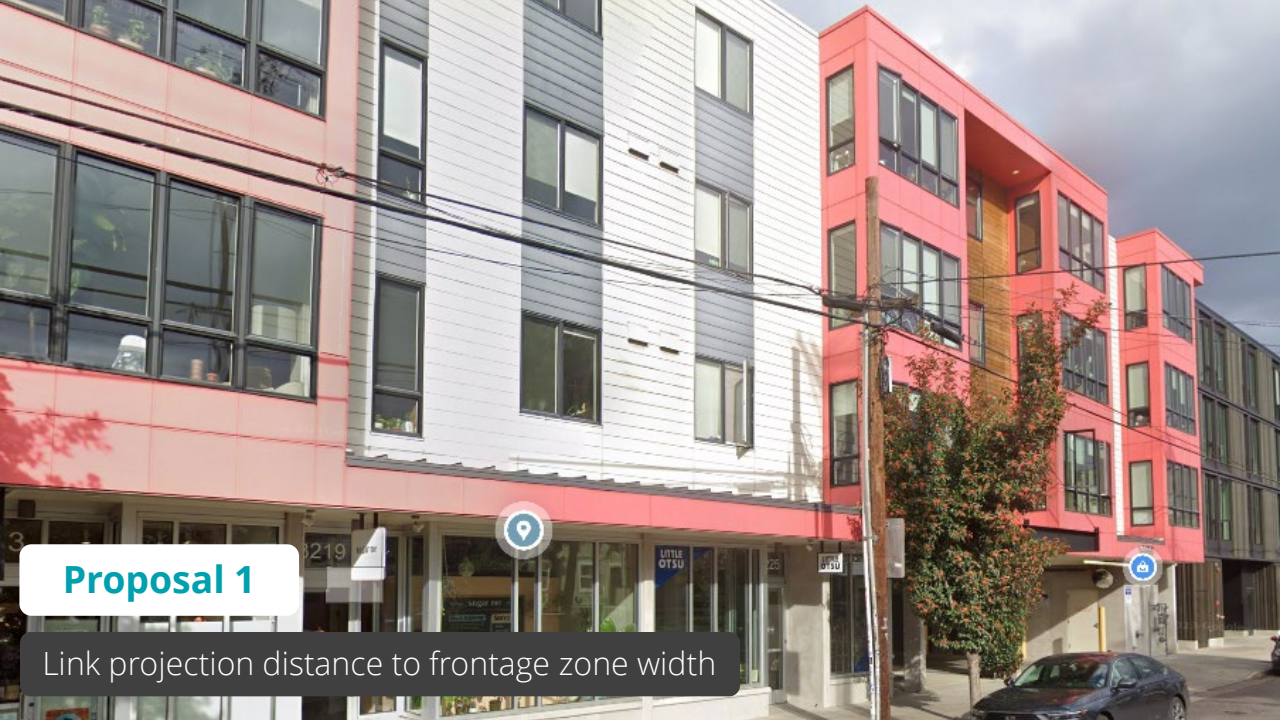
Why?

Avoid continuous cavernous or tunnel-like streetscapes as re-development occurs.

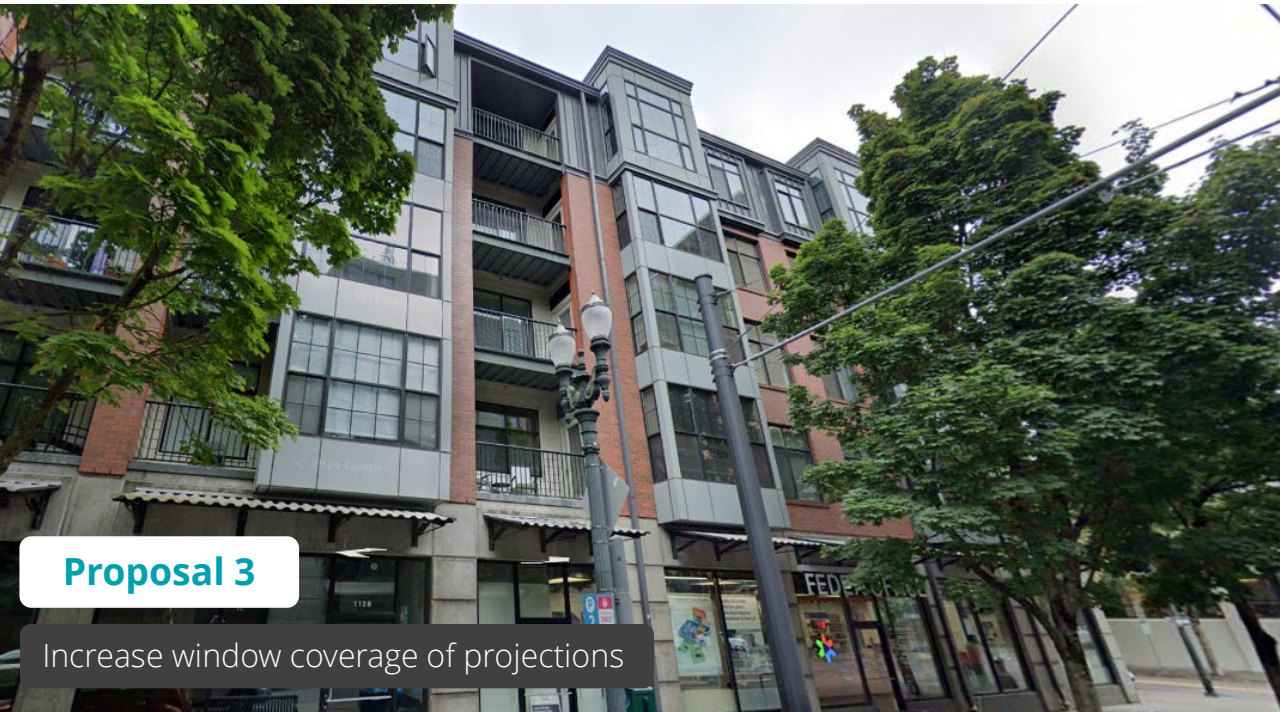
Proposed:

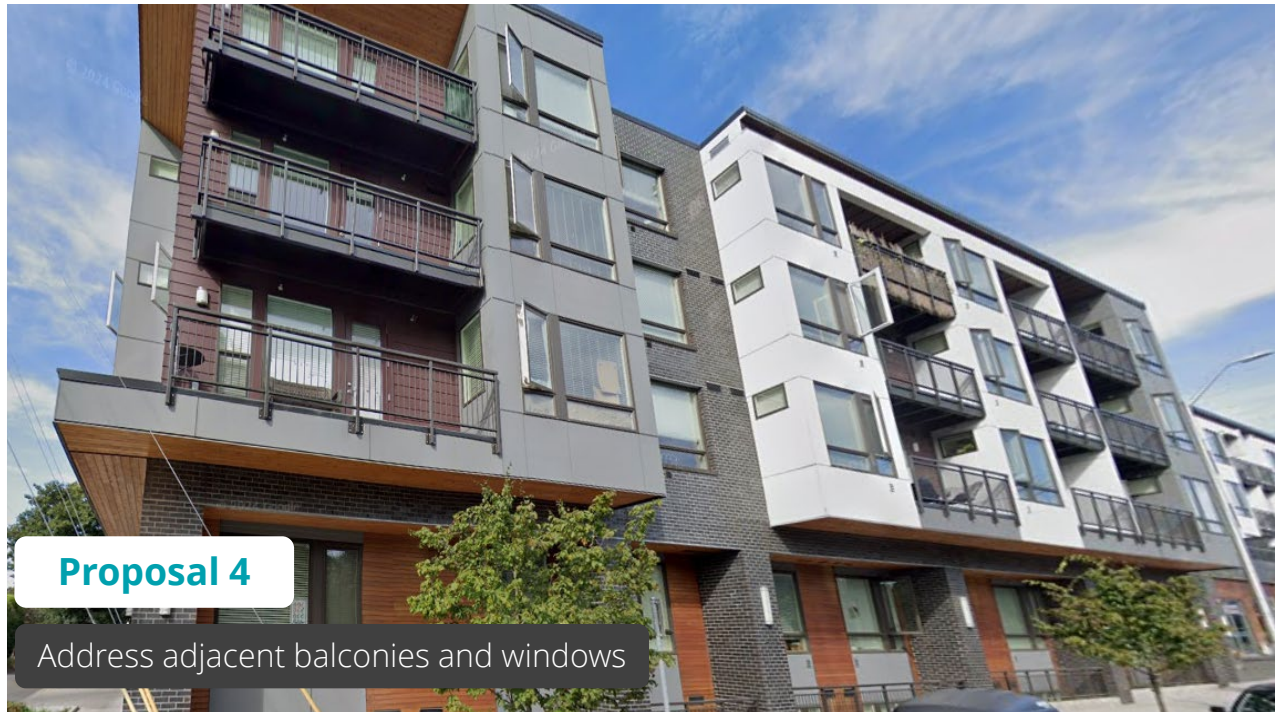
Maximum width of **12 feet** for each projecting window element. Where a window projection and a balcony are located immediately adjacent to one another, and the floor of such balcony has a minimum horizontal dimension of 6 feet, the maximum width for combined window and balcony projections is increased to **18 feet**.

Full text: “The maximum width for oriel window projections is 12 feet. When approved through Design Review, the width may vary provided the collective area of all projecting window elements on a wall does not exceed 40% of the building wall’s area and the width of any single projecting window element does not exceed 50% of its building wall’s length. Where an oriel window projection and a balcony are located immediately adjacent to one another, and the floor of such balcony has a minimum horizontal dimension of 6 feet, the maximum collective width for the balcony and window projections is 18 feet.”


Proposal 1
Link projection distance to frontage zone width


Proposal 2
Increase minimum height for oriel windows

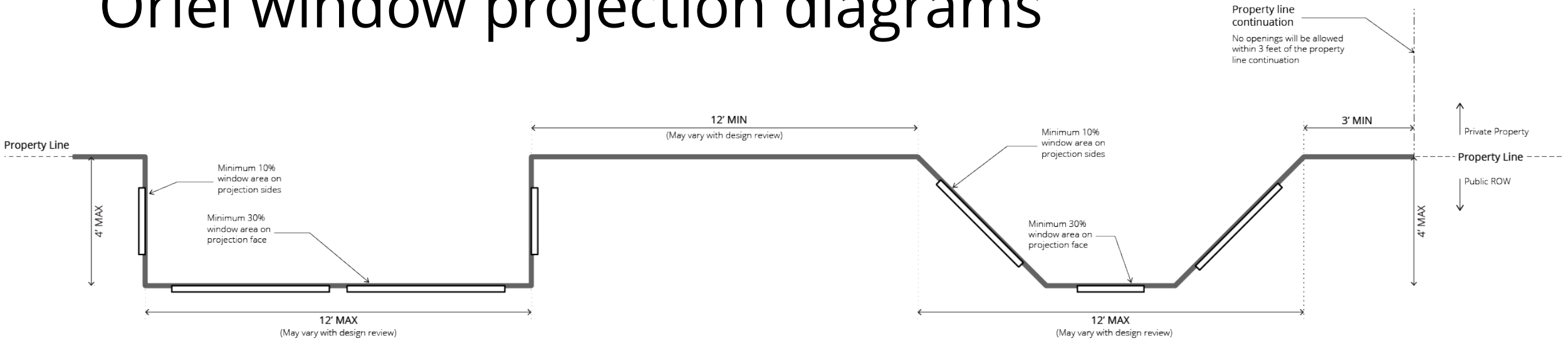

Proposal 3
Increase window coverage of projections

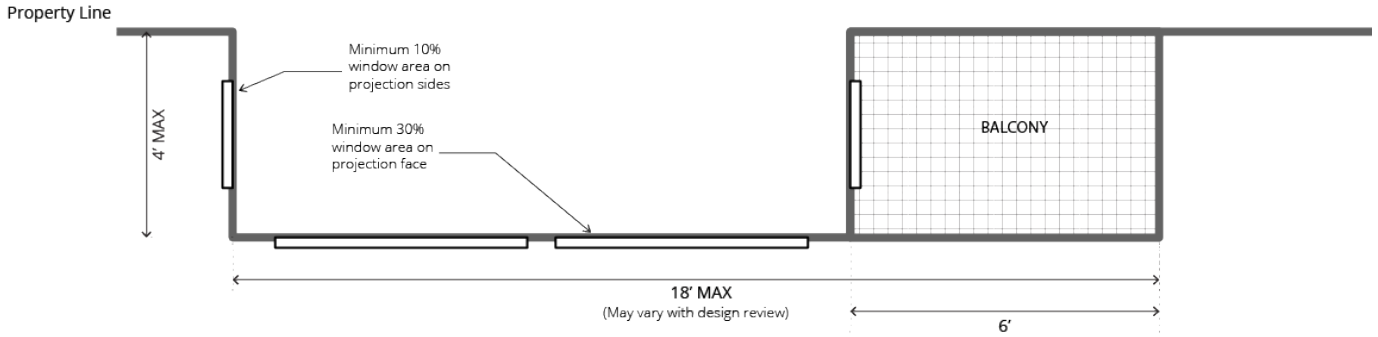

Proposal 4
Address adjacent balconies and windows

Considerations and Discussion

- Balancing a desirable sense of enclosure in the sidewalk corridor without becoming cavernous.
- Balancing architectural interest with private use of the public right-of-way.
- Distinguishing canopy/awnings that provide rain protection and pedestrian scale at the sidewalk level from large scale projecting architectural features.

Oriel window projection diagrams





Version with a balcony

The end