

## Article 3: Land Development Procedures

### Division 2: Rules for Calculation and Measurement

*(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)*

#### §113.0201 Purpose of Rules for Calculation and Measurement

The purpose of this division is to clarify and define the manner in which specific land development terms and development regulations are applied. The intent is to provide the rules for calculating, determining, establishing, and measuring those aspects of the natural and built environment that are regulated by the Land Development Code.

*(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)*

#### §113.0202 When Rules for Calculation and Measurement Apply

This division applies to development when the applicable regulations include terms or concepts that are shown in Table 113-02A. The Rules for Calculation and Measurement clarify development regulations and land development terms by expanding on the regulations and providing detailed explanations of pertinent aspects of the regulation. These rules govern the way in which the development regulations are implemented. The land development terms and the sections for the corresponding rules are provided in Table 113-02A. The Rules for Calculation and Measurement of one regulation or term may be used in conjunction with another.

**Table 113-02A**  
**Rules for Calculation and Measurement**

<b>Land Development Term or Concept</b>	<b>Section</b>
<i>Attic</i>	113.0210
<i>Building envelope</i>	113.0213
<i>Building facade</i>	113.0216
<i>Coastal bluff edge</i>	113.0219
<i>Density</i>	113.0222
Distance Between Uses	113.0225
<i>Existing Grade</i>	113.0228
<i>Gross floor area</i>	113.0234
<i>Lot</i>	113.0237
<i>Lot coverage</i>	113.0240
Lot Depth and Width	113.0243
<i>Property line</i>	113.0246
<i>Setback line</i>	113.0249
<i>Setbacks</i>	113.0252
<i>Sign copy area</i>	113.0255
<i>Sign face</i>	113.0258
<i>Story</i>	113.0261
<i>Street wall</i>	113.0264
<i>Street wall line</i>	113.0267
<i>Structure height</i>	113.0270
<i>Visibility area</i>	113.0273
<i>Yards</i>	113.0276

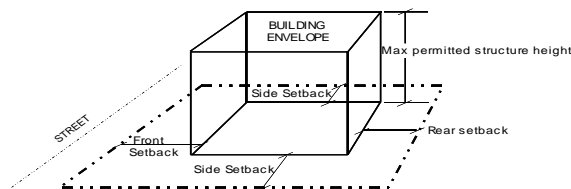
(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)  
(Amended 6-18-2013 by O-20261 N.S.; effective 7-19-2013.)

**§113.0213 Determining Building Envelope**

The *building envelope* is the three-dimensional space determined by identifying the maximum permitted *structure height* and the *setbacks* for a *premises*. The outline of the *building envelope* extends upward from the *setback lines* in an imaginary plane, to the maximum permitted *structure height*, thereby defining the three-dimensional space. This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02B.

**Diagram 113-02B**

**Building Envelope**

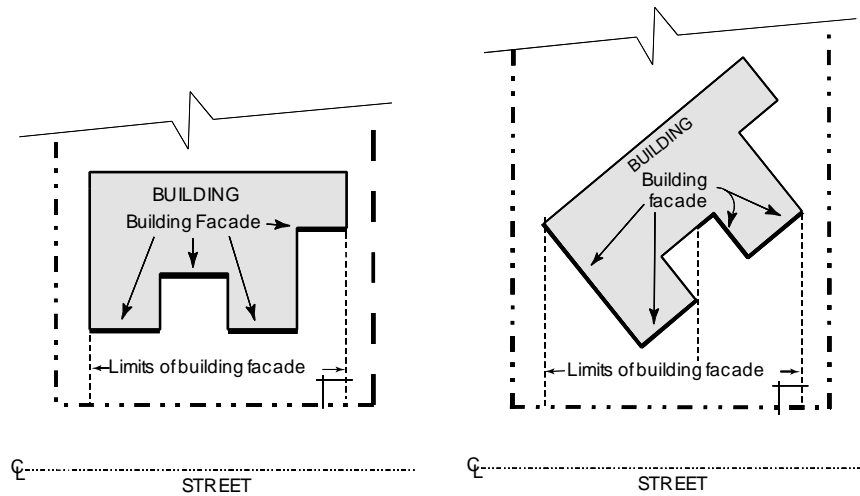


(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

**§113.0216 Determining Building Facade**

The *building facade* is made up of the outer surfaces of all walls, or portions of walls, that are visible when projected perpendicularly to a single plane that is most parallel to the closest abutting *public right-of-way*, as shown in Diagram 113-02C.

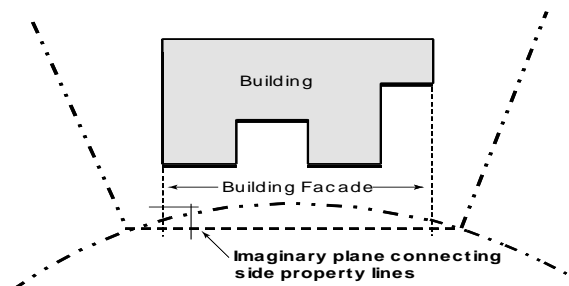
**Diagram 113-02C**  
**Building Facade**



The *building facade* is determined as follows:

- (a) For a corner *lot*, the *building facade* is determined separately for each *street frontage*.
- (b) For a *premises* abutting a curved *public right-of-way*, the plane used for determining the *building facade* is an imaginary line connecting the intersections of the two side *property lines* with the *public right-of-way*, as shown in Diagram 113-02D.

**Diagram 113-02D**  
**Building Facade with Curved Street Frontage**



- (c) The length of the *building facade* is the distance between the outer limits of the *building facade* measured along the single plane used to determine the *building facade*.
- (d) The area of the *building facade* is determined by multiplying the height of the walls by the length of the *building facade*. The area of the *building facade* includes the area of all doors and windows and also includes the area of the roof, in elevation, as viewed from the single plane used to determine the *building facade*.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

#### §113.0219 Determining Coastal Bluff Edge

*Coastal bluff edge* is determined as follows:

- (a) The *coastal bluff edge* is the uppermost termination of the *coastal bluff face* and the seaward-most termination of the top of the bluff on a *premises*.
- (b) When the top edge of the *coastal bluff face* is rounded toward the top of bluff as a result of erosion process related to the presence of the bluff face, the *coastal bluff edge* is that point nearest the bluff face beyond which the downward gradient of the land surface begins to increase more or less continuously until it reaches the general gradient of the *coastal bluff face*.
- (c) The *coastal bluff edge* is a continuous line across the length of the bluff on the *premises* from which all *coastal bluff edge setbacks* shall be measured.
- (d) The top of bluff is flat or contains a generally consistent gradient that is significantly less than that of the *coastal bluff face*.
- (e) In the case where there is a step-like feature at the top of the *coastal bluff*, the landward edge of the topmost riser-like landform on the *premises* is the *coastal bluff edge* for that *premises*.
- (f) The precise location of the *coastal bluff edge* shall be as determined by the City Manager in accordance with the regulations in Section 113.0219(a) through (e) and the Coastal Bluffs and Beaches Guidelines.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

**§113.0222 Calculating Maximum Permitted Density**

(a) Multiple Dwelling Unit Development

For *multiple dwelling unit development*, the maximum number of units that may be permitted on any *premises* is determined by dividing the *lot* area of the *premises* by the number of square feet required for each *dwelling unit* (maximum permitted *density*), as prescribed by the applicable base zone.

- (1) If the quotient resulting from this calculation exceeds a whole number by 0.50 or more, the number of *dwelling units* shall be increased to the next whole number.
- (2) The maximum number of dwelling units permitted on any *premises* that is located in more than one zone shall be the sum of the number of units permitted in each of the zones based on the area of the *premises* in each zone. The dwelling units may be located on the *premises* without regard to the zone boundaries.
- (3) In determining the maximum permitted *density*, the rounding provisions of Section 113.0222(a)(1) may be used only once.

Example of calculation of *density* for *multiple dwelling unit development*:

Lot Area: 1.5 acres x 43,560 (sq. ft./ac.) = 65,340 sq. ft.

Maximum Permitted *Density*: 1 *dwelling unit*/2000 sq. ft.

Units Permitted =  $65,340 \div 2,000 = 32.67$  *dwelling units*

Since the quotient exceeds a whole number by more than 0.50, the maximum number of permitted *dwelling units* shall be rounded up to 33 *dwelling units*.

(b) Single Dwelling Unit Development

For *single dwelling unit development*, no more than one dwelling unit is permitted on a *lot*. The maximum number of permitted *lots* that can be created by subdivision is determined by dividing the total lot area of the site by the minimum lot area prescribed by the applicable base zone. The quotient from this calculation is rounded down to the next whole number.

Example of calculation of *density* for *single dwelling unit development*:

Lot Area: 15 acres x 43,560 (sq. ft./ac.) = 653,400 sq. ft.

Minimum Lot Area Prescribed by Zone: 5,000 sq. ft.

*Lots Permitted* =  $653,400 \div 5,000 = 130.68$  *lots*

Round down to whole number for a total of 130 *lots*. A maximum of 130 dwelling units is permitted.

- (c) For purposes of calculating *density* for a *development* proposing a *density* bonus pursuant to Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 7, where the maximum *density* of the base zone and the *land use plan* are inconsistent, the greatest number of *dwelling units* allowed under the base zone or *land use plan* shall prevail. Calculations resulting in any fractional number shall be increased to the next whole number.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

(Retitled to “Calculating Maximum Permitted Density” and amended 7-28-2015 by O-20518 N.S.; effective 8-27-2015.)

(Amended 7-22-2024 by O-21836 N.S.; effective 10-5-2024.)

**[Editors Note:** Amendments as adopted by O-21836 N.S. will not apply within the Coastal Overlay Zone until the California Coastal Commission certifies it as a Local Coastal Program Amendment.

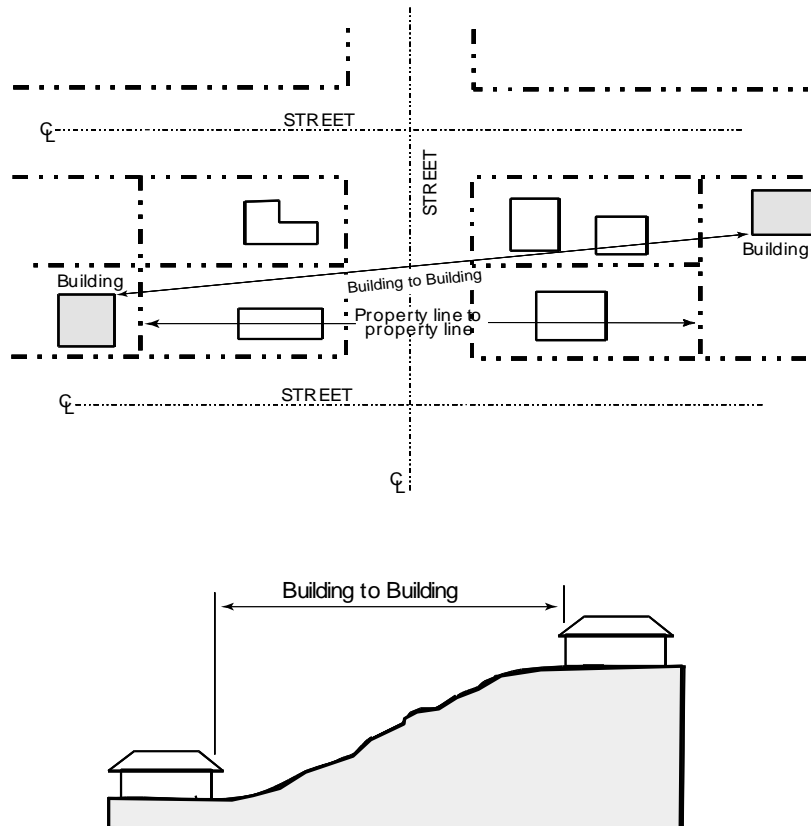
Click the link to view the Strikeout Ordinance highlighting changes to prior language  
[http://docs.sandiego.gov/municode\\_strikeout\\_ord/O-21836-SO.pdf](http://docs.sandiego.gov/municode_strikeout_ord/O-21836-SO.pdf)

**§113.0225 Measuring Distance Between Uses**

When there is a separation requirement between uses, the distance of the separation shall be measured as follows, except as specified by state law. See Diagram 113-02E.

**Diagram 113-02E**

**Distance Between Uses**



- (a) The distance shall be measured between *property lines*, buildings, or use locations, as required by the regulations for the particular use.
- (b) Except as provided in Section 113.0225(c), the distance between uses shall be measured horizontally in a straight line between the two closest points of the *property lines*, buildings, or use locations. The distance shall be measured horizontally without regard to topography or *structures* that would interfere with a straight-line measurement.



- (c) When measuring distance for separation requirements for *cannabis outlets* or *cannabis production facilities*, the measurement of distance between the uses shall take into account natural topographical barriers and constructed barriers such as *freeways* or *flood* control channels that would impede direct physical access between the uses. In such cases, the separation distance shall be measured as the most direct route around the barrier in a manner that establishes direct access.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

(Amended 4-5-2016 by O-20634 N.S.; effective 5-5-2016.)

(Amended 2-22-2017 by O-20793 N.S.; effective 4-12-2017.)

(Amended 10-17-2017 by O-20859 N.S.; effective 11-16-2017.)

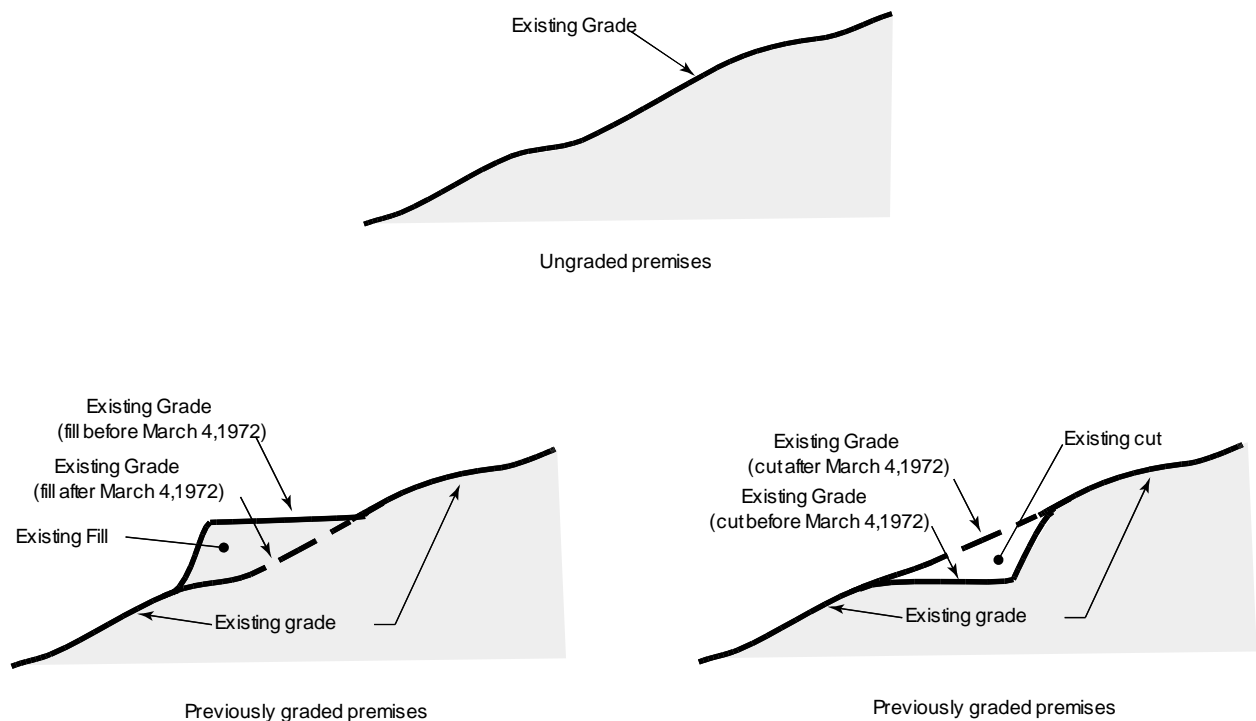
(Amended 1-8-2020 by O-21163 N.S.; effective 2-9-2020.)

### §113.0228 Determining Existing Grade

- (a) *Existing grade* is the ground elevation of the surface of a *premises* that has never been *graded* or, for a *premises* that has been *graded*, the ground elevation that existed on March 4, 1972. This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02F.

Diagram 113-02F

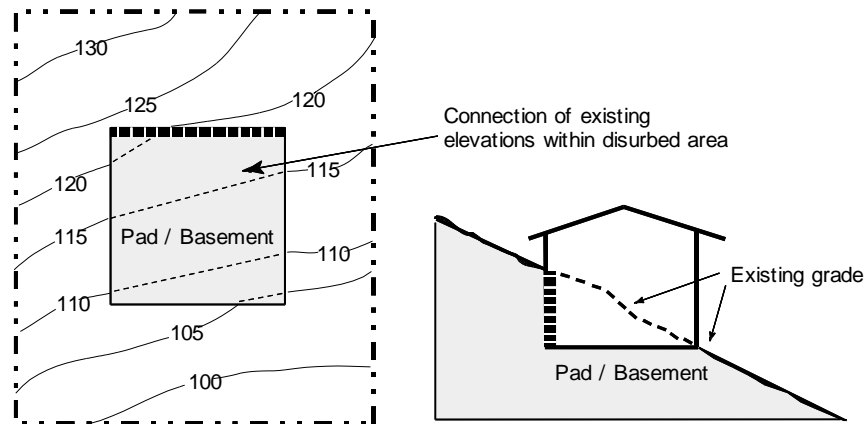
#### Existing Grade



- (b) If *grading* was approved and conducted as part of an approved *tentative map*, *existing grade* is the ground elevation of the *premises* following completion of the approved *grading* operation.
- (c) When *existing grade* on a previously graded *premises* is not readily apparent, the City Manager may use the *grade* adjacent to the previously graded area or the *grade* on adjacent properties to establish the *existing grade* for the previously graded area. *Existing grade* at the disturbed area shall be an imaginary plane that connects elevations of *existing grade* through the previously graded area, as shown in Diagram 113-02G.

**Diagram 113-02G**

**Connecting Elevations for Existing Grade**



(Amended 1-9-2001 by O-18910 N.S.; effective 8-8-2001.)

**§113.0234 Calculating Gross Floor Area**

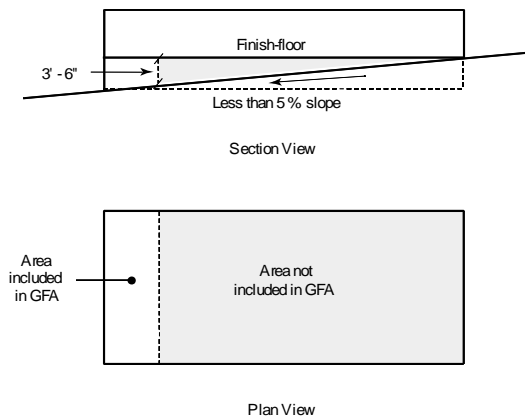
*Gross floor area* is calculated in relationship to the *structure* and *grade* adjacent to the exterior walls of a building. The elements included in the *gross floor area* calculation differ according to the type of *development* proposed and are listed in Sections 113.0234(a)-(c). *Gross floor area* does not include the elements listed in Section 113.0234(d). The total *gross floor area* for a *premises* is regulated by the *floor area ratio* development standard.

- (a) Elements Included in *Gross Floor Area* for Development in All Zones
  - (1) *Gross floor area* includes all existing and proposed *floors* within the horizontal area delineated by the exterior surface of the surrounding exterior walls of the building.

- (2) *Gross floor area for basements* is calculated as follows:
- (A) For *lots* that slope less than 5 percent along each edge of the building footprint, *gross floor area* includes the area of all portions of a *basement* where the vertical distance between *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, and the *finish-floor* elevation above exceeds 3 feet, 6 inches as shown in Diagram 113-02I.

**Diagram 113-02I**

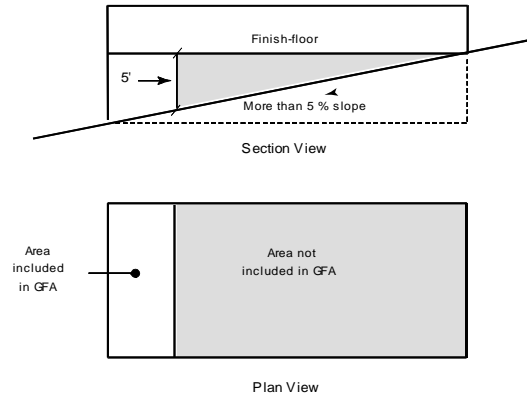
**Basements with Less than 5 Percent Slope**



- (B) For *lots* that slope 5 percent or more along any edge of the building footprint, *gross floor area* includes the area of all portions of a *basement* where the vertical distance between *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, and the *finish-floor* elevation above exceeds 5 feet, as shown in Diagram 113-02J.

### Diagram 113-02J

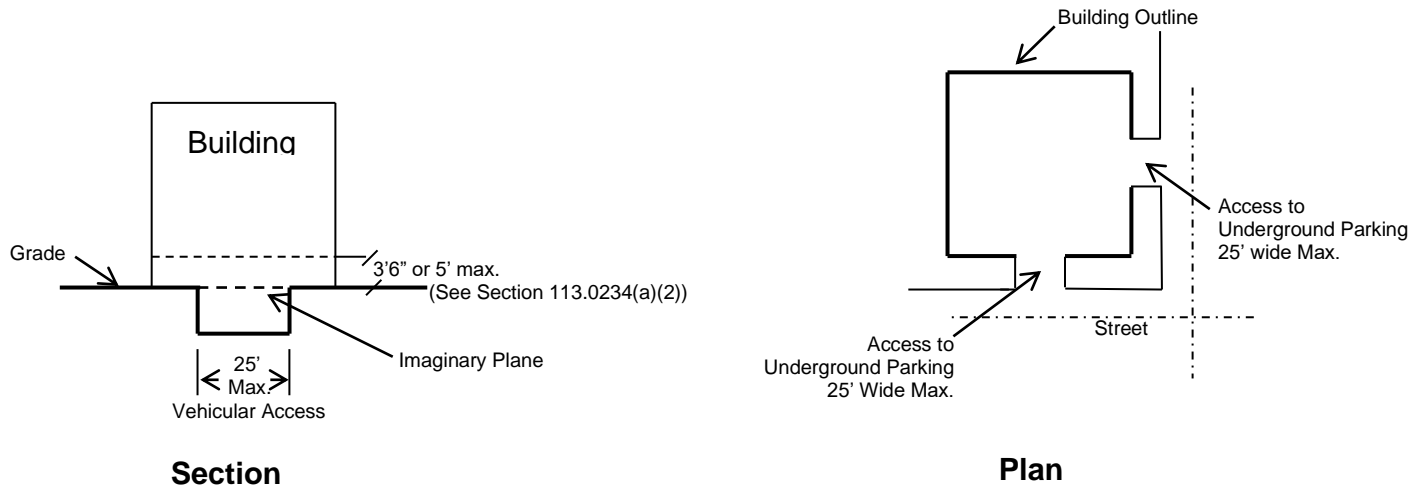
#### Basements with 5 Percent or More Slope



- (3) *Gross floor area* for underground parking *structures* includes the following, except where the parking *structure* design meets the exemptions identified in Section 113.0234(d)(3):
- (A) All portions of the *structure* where the vertical distance between the existing or proposed *grade*, whichever is lower, and the finished *floor* elevation above, exceeds 5 feet.
  - (B) The vertical measurement between adjacent *grade* and the finished *floor* above shall not include subterranean vehicular access openings (up to a maximum of 25 foot width). Instead, the vertical distance measurement shall be measured from the imaginary plane perpendicular to the driveway access that connects the adjacent *grades* to the finished *floor* above.

**Diagram 113-02K**

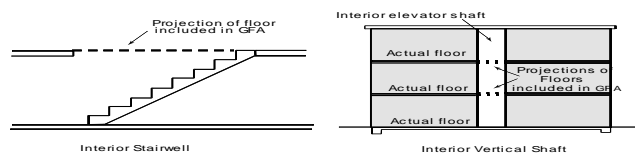
**Underground Parking Structures**



- (4) *Gross floor area* includes enclosed exterior stairwells and enclosed exterior elevator shafts.
- (5) *Gross floor area* includes interior shafts such as elevator shafts, ventilation shafts, and other similar vertical shafts, interior stairwells, ramps, and mechanical equipment rooms. *Gross floor area* includes the area of the horizontal projection into the interior shaft of each *floor* in plan view that is served by the elevator, shaft, stairwell, or ramp, as shown in Diagram 113-02L.

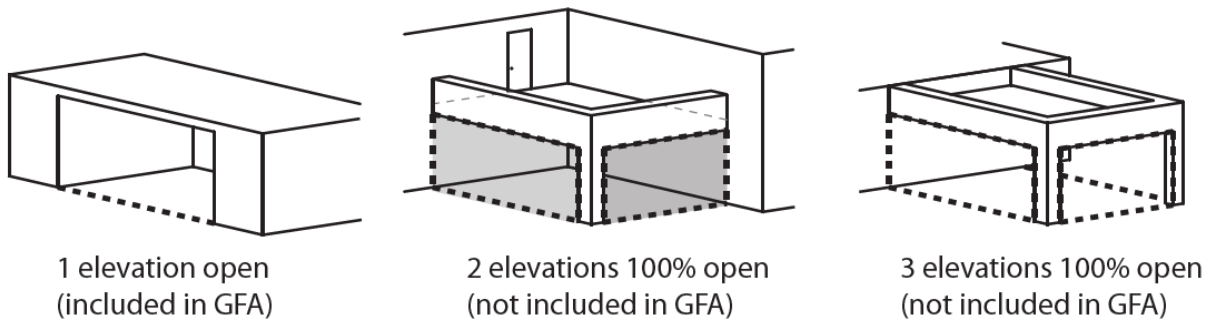
**Diagram 113-02L**

**Interior Stairwells and Vertical Shafts**



- (6) *Gross floor area* includes on- or above-grade parking structures, garages, and carports that are constructed and maintained with less than two elevations of the element that are 100 percent completely open, measured from the finish-floor to the bottom of the floor or roof elevation immediately above, except for the support columns with maximum dimensions of 18 inches by 18 inches in plan view, as shown in Diagram 113-02M, and except where the parking structure design meets the exemptions identified in Section 113.0234(d)(3).

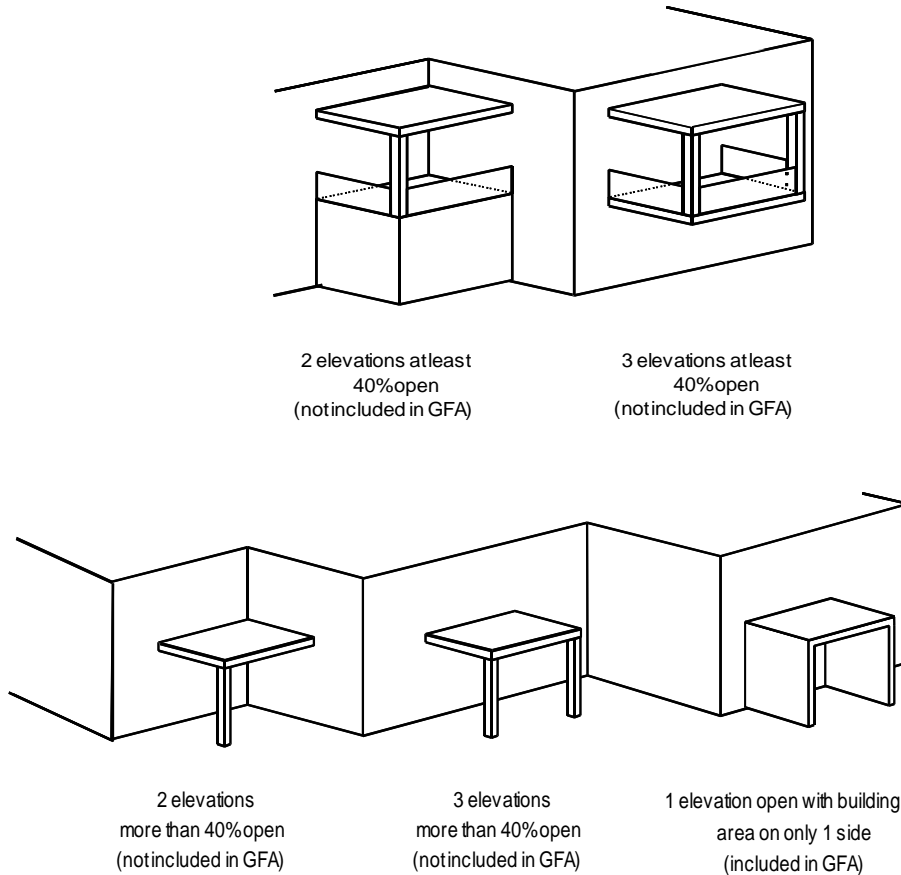
**Diagram 113-02M**  
**Garages/Carports**



- (7) *Gross floor area* includes *penthouses*, except in the following instances:
- (A) When height of the enclosure above the highest roofline of the building or *structure* upon which the enclosure is located is no more than 13 feet for an elevator shaft or 9 feet for a stairwell; and
  - (B) When total plan area of the enclosure or enclosures is not more than 10 percent of the area of the roof plan of the building.
- (b) Additional Elements Included in *Gross Floor Area* in Residential Zones and for Residential Development in Other Zones. Section 113.0234(b) does not apply to commercial *development*.
- (1) *Gross floor area* includes roofed porches, entrances, exterior balconies, and patios when they project from the primary *structure* and are constructed and maintained with at least two elevations of the element that are less than 40 percent permanently open, as shown in Diagram 113-02N.

Diagram 113-02N

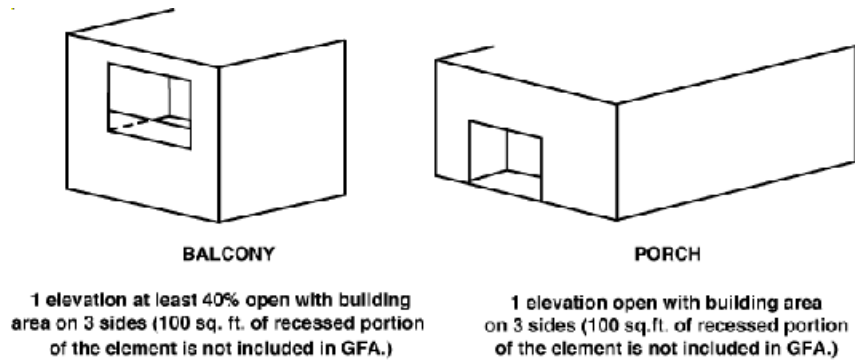
Projecting Porches and Balconies



- (2) *Gross floor area* includes roofed porches, entrances, exterior balconies, and patios when the element is recessed or partially recessed in the *structure* and surrounded or partially surrounded on three sides by the enclosed building. *Gross floor area* does not include 100 square feet of the recessed portion of the element when the fourth elevation of the element is at least 40 percent permanently open. This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02O.

**Diagram 113-02O**

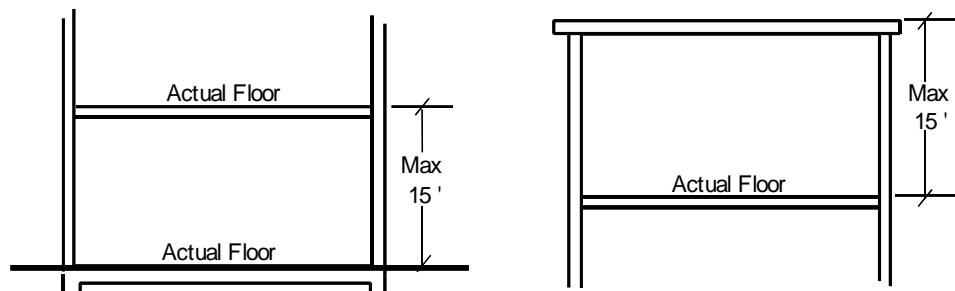
**Recessed Porches and Balconies**



- (3) *Gross floor area* includes any projected *floor* area and other phantom *floors* within the building's exterior walls where specified dimensions are met. Phantom *floors* are located within the space above or below actual *floors* within a building, and are measured separately above each actual *floor* or below the lowest actual *floor* for under *floor* area, described as follows:
- (A) *Phantom Floors*. When the vertical distance between the finish-*floor* elevation and the finish-*floor* or flat roof immediately above does not exceed 15 feet, the area of one *floor* (the actual *floor*) is included in *gross floor area*, as shown in Diagram 113-02Q.

**Diagram 113-02Q**

**One Floor Below Actual Floor and Flat Roof**

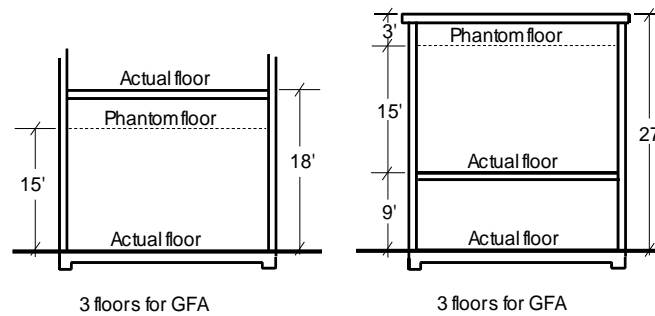




When the vertical distance between the finish-*floor* elevation and the finish-*floor* or roof elevation immediately above exceeds 15 feet, *gross floor area* includes the area of the actual *floor* plus the area of a phantom *floor* at 15 feet of height increments, or portion thereof, of height above the 15-foot height, as shown in Diagram 113-02R.

**Diagram 113-02R**

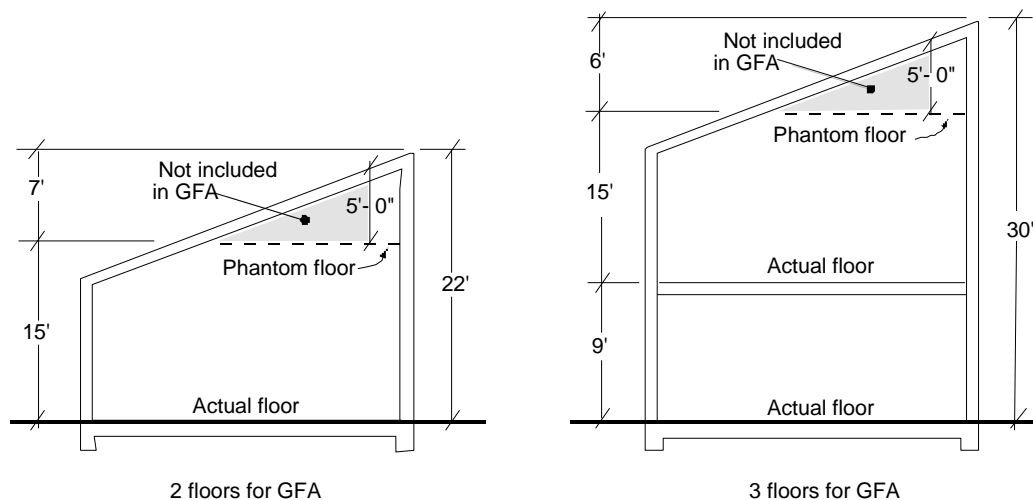
**Multiple Floors below Actual Floor and Flat Roof**



*Gross floor area* excludes those portions of actual *floors* and phantom *floors* where there is less than 5 feet of vertical distance between the actual or phantom *floor* and the ceiling immediately above.

**Diagram 113-02S**

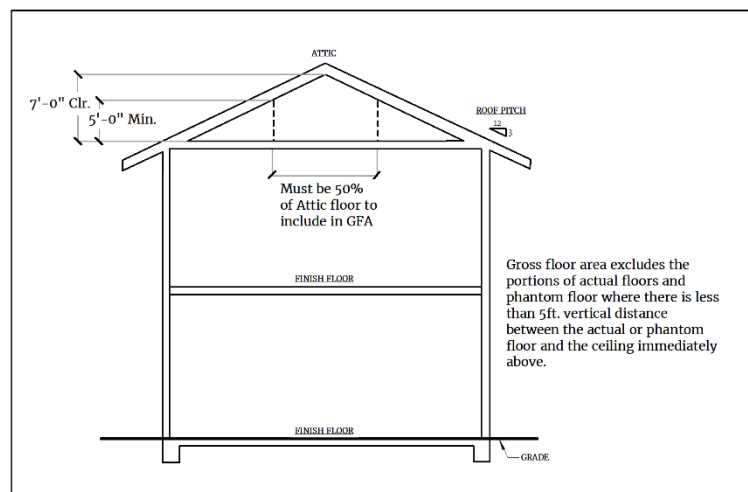
**Multiple Floors Below Sloped Roof**



- (B) *Attic Space.* Gross floor area includes the *attic space* as shown in Diagram 113-02T, where there are at least 5 feet of vertical distance between the *attic floor* and the roof elevation immediately above. The location of any ceilings immediately below the roof does not affect the measurement of phantom floors above the highest finish-floor elevation.

Diagram 113-02T

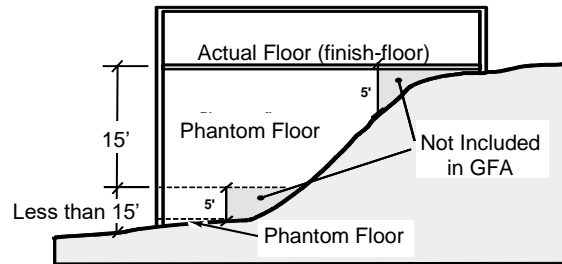
Attic Space



- (C) *Underfloor Area.* Gross floor area includes additional phantom floors within the enclosed space below the lowest finish-floor elevation. In this case, the area of a phantom floor is included in gross floor area at each 15-foot increment, or portion thereof, of height between the lowest finish-floor elevation and grade, measured vertically from the lowest finish-floor elevation, as shown in Diagram 113-02U. Gross floor area excludes any area where there is less than 5 feet of height between grade and the finish-floor or phantom floor elevation immediately above.

Diagram 113-02U

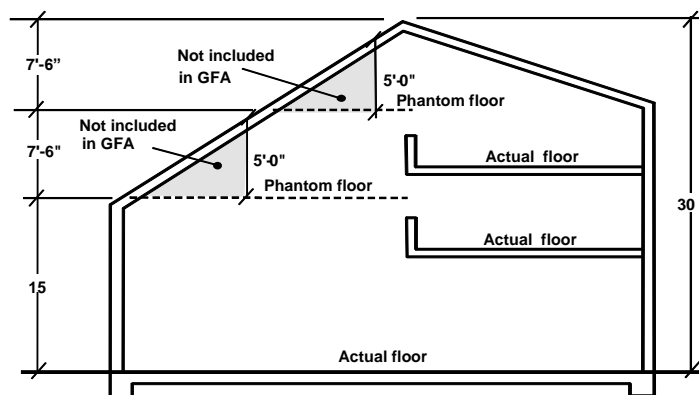
Underfloor Area



- (D) Interior Balconies, Mezzanines, and Lofts. *Gross floor area* includes the area within a building adjacent to all interior balconies, mezzanines, and lofts, pursuant to the regulations for *phantom floors* in Section 113.0234(b)(3)(A) as if such elements did not exist adjacent to the space, as shown in Diagram 113-02V. The location of an adjacent interior balcony, mezzanine, or loft does not affect the location of *phantom floors* above the finished-*floor* elevation of the adjacent space.

Diagram 113-02V

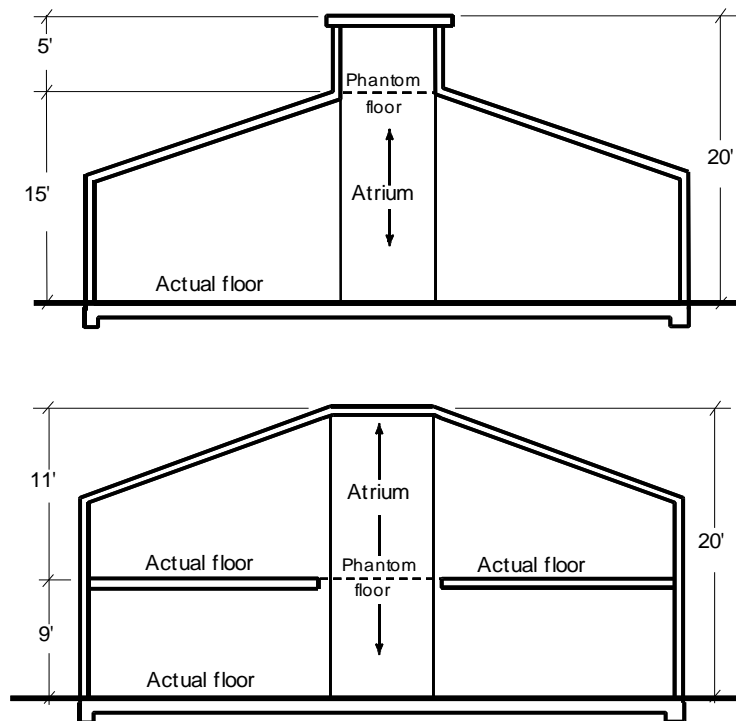
Mezzanines



- (E) *Atriums.* Gross floor area includes the area of the horizontal projection into the *atrium* from each adjacent *floor* in plan view. If no adjacent *floors* exist, the regulations for phantom floors in Section 113.0234(b)(3)(A) apply to the space within the *atrium*. This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02W.

Diagram 113-02W

Atriums



- (4) *Roof Decks.* Gross floor area includes *roof decks* when any portion of the deck's parapet, guardrail, wall, or *fence* (open or solid) enclosing the area exceeds an average of 42 inches in height, or exceeds 54 inches in height at any point.

- (c) Additional Elements Included in *Gross Floor Area* in Commercial and Industrial Zones (for other than residential development)
  - (1) *Gross floor area* includes *atriums*, provided, however, that only proposed or existing actual *floors* are included.
  - (2) *Gross floor area* includes porches when completely enclosed on all sides.
- (d) Elements Not Included in *Gross Floor Area*
  - (1) *Interior Courts*, as defined in Section 113.0103; and
  - (2) Interior modifications, including additions of actual *floor* areas that do not affect the outer limits of the existing *structural envelope*.
  - (3) *Parking Structures*
    - (A) This exclusion from *gross floor area* does not apply to:
      - (i) Garages or carports that serve *single dwelling unit development*; or
      - (ii) Garages or carports that serve *multiple dwelling unit development* where each *multiple dwelling unit* has access to its own separate garage or carport.
    - (B) In order to exclude a parking *structure* from the calculation of *gross floor area*, a combination of at least two of the following shall be incorporated into project design as follows:
      - (i) The parking *structure* includes at least one subterranean *floor* where the vertical distance between adjacent *grade* and the finished *floor* elevation above is 5 feet or less. Elevations that provide vehicular access to a subterranean parking level may still meet this provision where the vertical distance is 5 feet or less as measured in accordance with Section 113.0234(a)(3)(B);
      - (ii) The parking *structure* is part of a wrapped design to screen parked vehicles within the *structure* from the adjacent *public right-of-way*;
      - (iii) The parking *structure* is screened from the adjacent *public right-of-way* on at least two elevations; or

- (iv) The parking *structure* is at least 40 percent open on at least two elevations.
- (4) Bay windows that meet all of the following criteria:
  - (A) The bay window height is 5 feet or less.
  - (B) The interior space created by the bay window does not project outward more than 4 feet.
  - (C) At least a 3 foot clear space is provided between the bottom of the bay window projection and the grade below.
  - (D) The bay window projection does not require structural support.
  - (E) The total length of the bay window shall not exceed 15 linear feet.

*(Amended 1-9-2001 by O-18910 N.S.; effective 8-8-2001.)*  
*(Amended 3-1-2006 by O-19467 N.S.; effective 8-10-2006.)*  
*(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)*  
*(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)*  
*(Amended 5-5-2015 by O-20481 N.S.; effective 6-4-2015.)*  
*(Amended 4-5-2016 by O-20634 N.S.; effective 5-5-2016.)*  
*(Amended 3-22-2018 by O-20917 N.S.; effective 4-21-2018.)*  
*(Amended 1-8-2020 by O-21164 N.S.; effective 2-9-2020.)*  
*(Amended 2-1-2021 by O-21288 N.S.; effective 3-3-2021.)*  
*(Amended 7-22-2024 by O-21836 N.S.; effective 10-5-2024.)*

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**§113.0237 Determining a Lot**

- (a) A *lot* is legal for purposes of *development* if it meets any one of the following criteria:
- (1) The *lot* is an individual parcel designated with a number or letter on a *final map* or *parcel map* recorded with the County Recorder, a record of survey map approved by resolution of the City Council and recorded with the County Recorder after December 5, 1954, or a division plat approved by and filed with the Development Services Department; or
  - (2) The *lot* has been officially determined as a suitable building site or approved for *development* under the Land Development Code; or
  - (3) The *lot* was created before March 4, 1972 as a result of a boundary adjustment between two adjoining *lot* owners wherein the land was taken from one parcel and added to the adjoining parcel and no new *lots* were thereby created; or
  - (4) The *lot* was created before March 4, 1972, held as a separate parcel by a subsequent purchaser, and has at least 15 feet of street frontage or other legal access to a dedicated street as approved by the City Engineer; or
  - (5) The *lot* was held as a separate legal parcel upon annexation to the City of San Diego; or
  - (6) The *lot* consists of two or more parcels held by the same *record owner* that otherwise meet the requirements of Section 113.0237(a)(1), that are tied together through a recorded Lot Tie Agreement between the *record owner* and the City in accordance with Section 129.0120.
- (b) Any *lot* or parcel that does not comply with the minimum lot area or required lot dimensions may nevertheless be used in compliance with the applicable zone if the *lot* is a legal *lot* as determined by Section 113.0237(a).
- (c) A Certificate of Compliance may be requested in accordance with Section 125.0210 to certify that a *lot* is legal for *development*.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

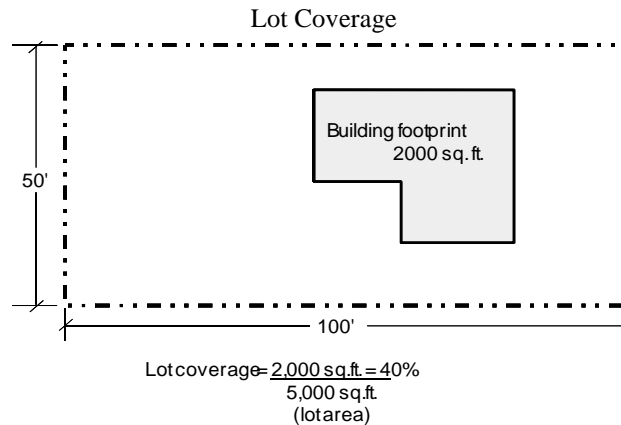
(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)

(Amended 6-18-2013 by O-20261 N.S.; effective 7-19-2013.)

### §113.0240 Calculating Lot Coverage

*Lot coverage* is calculated by dividing the square footage of the *structure's* footprint, measured from the outer surface of the exterior walls or support *structure* by the square footage of the *lot*. *Lot coverage* is expressed as a percentage (for example, 60 percent). This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02X.

**Diagram 113-02X**



The following *structures* are not included in calculating *lot coverage*:

- (a) Exterior balconies, entrances, canopies, rigid *awnings*, stoops, openly supported terraces, openly supported exterior stairways, and sun baffles or shades when these structures do not project more than 6 feet from the supporting *structure* and are constructed and maintained with 40 percent or more of the vertical surface permanently open;
- (b) Roofed areas enclosed by three or fewer exterior walls of a building that provide shelter to exterior balconies, entrances, stoops, terraces, and stairways;
- (c) *Architectural projections*;
- (d) Those portions of *underground parking structures*, first *stories*, and *basements* lying 3 feet or less above *grade*; and
- (e) Those portions of solar energy systems lying outside of the exterior surfaces of walls.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

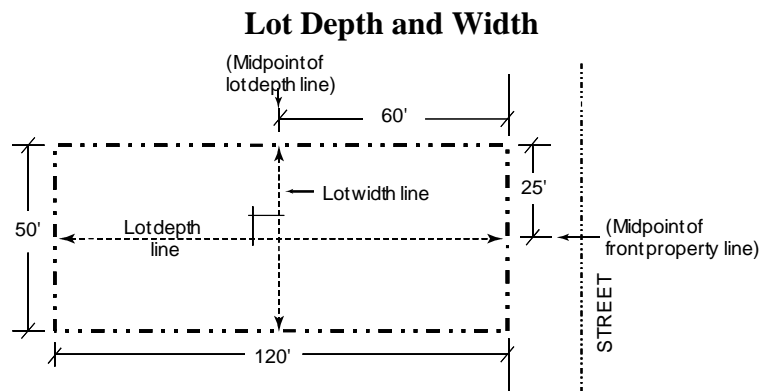
(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)



**§113.0243 Measuring Lot Depth and Lot Width**

- (a) Lot depth is measured along an imaginary straight line drawn from the midpoint of the front *property line* of the *lot* to the midpoint of the rear *property line*.
- (b) Lot width is measured along an imaginary straight line drawn at right angles to the lot depth line, between the side *lot lines* at the point midway between the front and rear *property lines*. Diagram 113-02Y illustrates how to measure lot depth and width.

**Diagram 113-02Y**



- (c) *Lot Width for Residential Lots*
  - (1) For irregularly shaped *lots*, such as pie shaped *lots*, the *lot* width is determined by calculating the average lot width for the first 50 feet of lot depth.
  - (2) For consolidated *lots*, the *lot* width is equivalent to the total width of the *premises* after the consolidation.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)

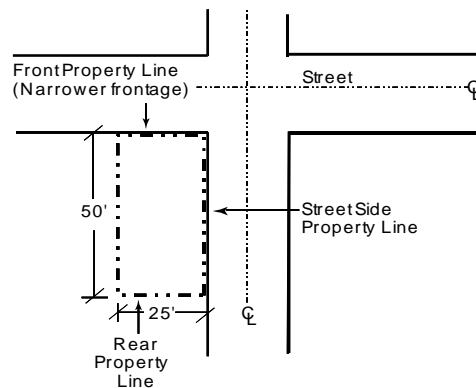
## §113.0246 Determining Property Lines

The *property lines* define the perimeter of a *lot* or *premises* and separate one *lot* or *premises* from any other *lot* or *premises* or from the *public right-of-way*. These rules for determining *property lines* are for purposes of applying and interpreting development regulations only and are not intended to affect ownership rights or responsibilities. These rules apply regardless of ownership of property extending into the *public right-of-way*. Where *dedications* for *streets* or *alleys* are required in accordance with Section 142.0610, the *property lines* used to calculate *lot* area for the purpose of calculating the maximum permitted *density* and maximum permitted *gross floor area* shall be based on the *property lines* prior to the *dedication*. Where *dedications* for *streets* or *alleys* are required in accordance with Section 142.0610, the *property lines* used to calculate front of *street side setbacks* shall be based on the *property lines* prior to the *dedication*.

- (a) **Front Property Line.** The front *property line* separates a *lot* from the *public right-of-way* or private street. On corner *lots*, the front *property line* lies along the narrowest *street frontage*, as shown in Diagram 113-02Z.

**Diagram 113-02Z**

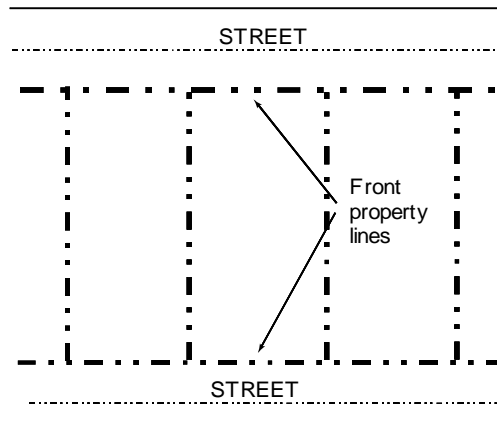
### Front Property Line for Corner Lots



- (b) **Front Property Line for Double-Fronted Lots.** When a *lot* extends from one *street* to another *street*, the front *property line* lies along both frontages, as shown in Diagram 113-02AA, unless the right of vehicular access has been waived to one of the *streets* as required by a governmental agency. In this case, the line separating the *lot* from the *street* where access is waived becomes the rear *property line*.

### Diagram 113-02AA

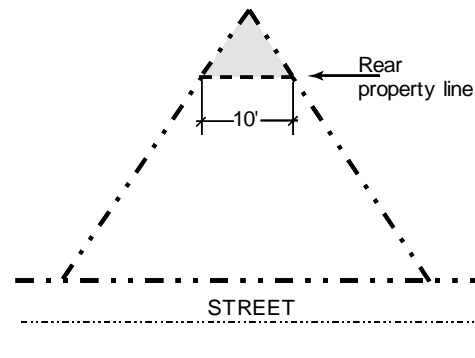
#### Front Property Line for Double-Fronted Lots



- (c) **Rear Property Line.** The rear *property line* is the *property line* opposite and most distant from the front *property line*, as shown in Diagram 113-02Z. For a triangular *lot*, the rear *property line* is a line 10 feet in length within the *lot* that connects the two side *property lines* and is parallel to the front *property line*, or parallel to the chord of a curved front *property line*, and at the maximum distance from it, as shown in Diagram 113-02BB.

### Diagram 113-02BB

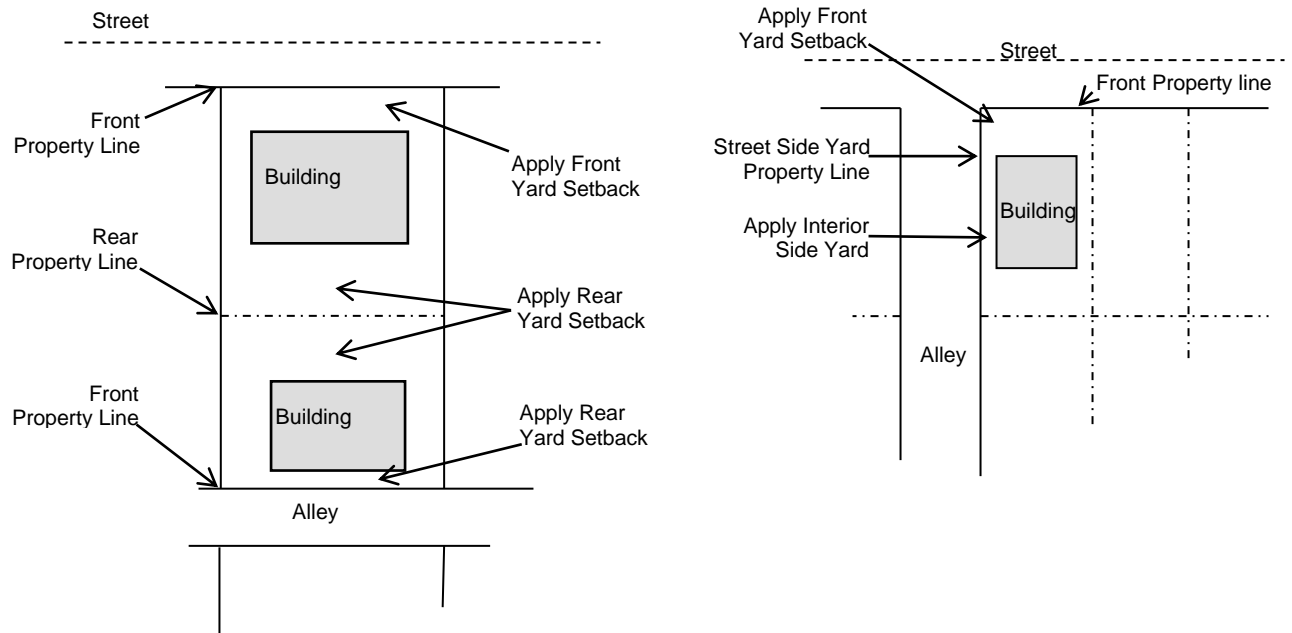
#### Rear Property Line on Triangular Lot



- (d) *Side and Street Side Property Lines.* The side *property lines* connect the front *property lines* to the rear *property lines* at the corners of the *lot*. The side *property line* that abuts the *public right-of-way* is the *street side property line*.
- (e) *Property Lines that Abut an Alley.* A *property line* that abuts an *alley* shall be determined in accordance with Section 113.0246(a) through (d). However, the *property line* that abuts an *alley* shall not be considered a *street property line* for the purpose of determining *setbacks* or *street yards* as indicated below and as shown in Diagram 113-02CC.
- (1) *Alley adjacent to front property line.* A *setback* equivalent to a rear yard shall be applied when a *lot* abuts an *alley* as a front *property line*.
  - (2) *Alley adjacent to side property line.* A *setback* equivalent to an interior side yard shall be applied when a *lot* abuts an *alley* as a street side *property line*.
  - (3) *Alley adjacent to rear property line.* A *setback* equivalent to a rear yard shall be applied when a *lot* abuts an *alley* as a rear *property line*.

**Diagram 113-02CC**

**Alley Setbacks**

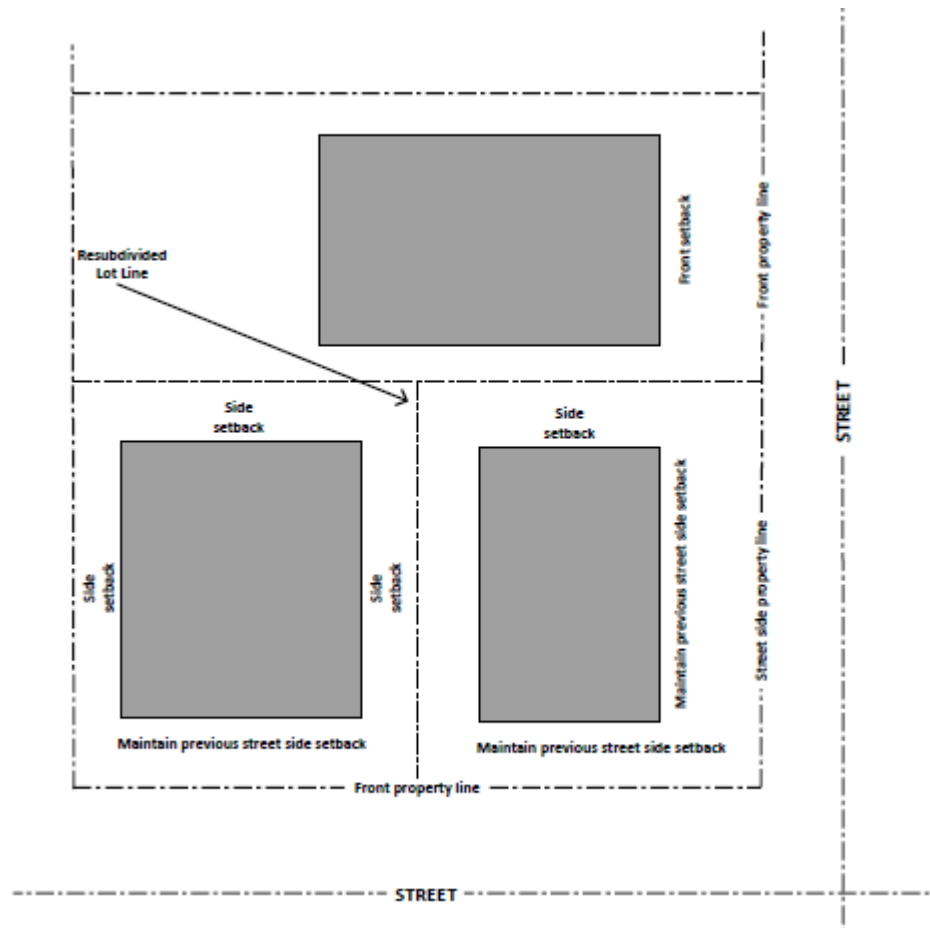


(f) Resubdivided Corner *Lots* in Residential Zones.

In residential zones, *property lines* for resubdivided corner *lots* shall be determined in accordance with Section 113.0246 (a) through (d); however, the *setbacks* along the front *property line* and *street side property line* shall observe the *setback* requirements placed on the original *lot* configuration and the remaining *property lines* shall observe the required interior side *setback* requirements of the zone, as shown in Diagram 113-02DD.

Diagram 113-02DD

Setbacks for Resubdivided Corner Lots



(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)

(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)  
(Amended 7-22-2024 by O-21836 N.S.; effective 10-5-2024.)

**[Editors Note:** Amendments as adopted by O-21836 N.S. will not apply within the Coastal Overlay Zone until the California Coastal Commission certifies it as a Local Coastal Program Amendment.

Click the link to view the Strikeout Ordinance highlighting changes to prior language  
[http://docs.sandiego.gov/municode\\_strikeout\\_ord/O-21836-SO.pdf](http://docs.sandiego.gov/municode_strikeout_ord/O-21836-SO.pdf)

#### §113.0249 Determining Setback Line

- (a) The *setback line* is a line that runs parallel to the nearest *property line* at a distance inward from the *property line* equal to the *setback*. The area between the *setback line* and the parallel *property line* is the required yard. A continuous line connecting all *setback lines* defines the boundaries of the *building envelope* at ground level. See also Sections 113.0246 (Determining Property Lines) and 113.0252 (Measuring Setbacks).
- (b) *Setbacks* established by the Land Development Code may be modified by ordinance, approved final *subdivision*, record of survey, or division plat. In these situations the *setback line* will be as described in the pertinent document
- (c) Where it can be demonstrated that *setback* lines shown on a *final map*, survey or other planning document were plotted solely for information purposes to illustrate the *setback* dimensions that were in effect at the time the document was approved, the *setback* required by the underlying base zone in the Land Development Code shall apply.
- (d) When a side *setback* is allowed to observe the minimum dimensions as described in Section 131.0431, all additions to the primary *structure* thereafter shall maintain that established side *setback*.

(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)  
(Amended 11-28-2005 by O-19444 N.S.; effective 2-9-2006.)  
(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)  
(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)

#### §113.0252 Measuring Setbacks

- (a) The distance of the *setback* is measured inward from and perpendicular to the nearest *property line*, as follows, except as otherwise indicated in Section 113.0246(e) and (f):
  - (1) The front *setback* is measured perpendicular to the front *property line*;

- (2) The side *setback* is measured perpendicular to the side *property line*;
  - (3) The *street side setback* is measured perpendicular to the *street side property line*; and
  - (4) The rear *setback* is measured perpendicular to the rear *property line*.
- (b) Those portions of *underground parking structures*, first *stories*, and *basements* that are above *grade* are subject to *setback* requirements. *Structures* located completely underground are exempt from the *setback* requirements except where the *structure* would conflict with the required landscape and irrigation, or as otherwise regulated by Section 113.0461.
- (c) For the purpose of determining whether new *development* complies with the *setback*, the measurement shall be taken from the *property line* inward to the outer edge of the building frame. Where a zero *setback* is provided, the edge of finished material shall not extend beyond the *property line*.  
(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)  
(Amended 11-28-2005 by O-19444 N.S.; effective 2-9-2006.)  
(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)  
(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)

#### **§113.0255 Calculating Sign Copy Area**

- (a) For *wall signs*, the copy area of a *sign* is the area of the smallest geometric figure that can enclose the actual *sign copy*. See Diagram 113.02EE.
- (b) For *internally illuminated signs*, the entire illuminated face is considered the copy area.  
(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)  
(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)

#### **§113.0258 Calculating Sign Face**

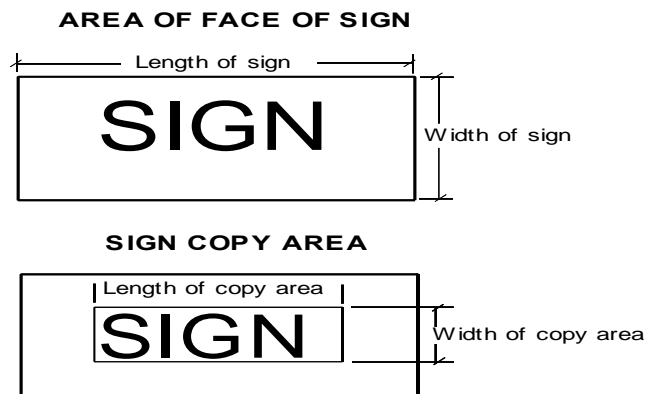
The *sign face*, as shown in Diagram 113-02EE, is calculated by multiplying the length of the *sign* by the width of the *sign*.

- (a) The *sign face* of any two-faced *sign* with parallel faces, or V-type *sign* with an interior angle of 45 degrees or less, is the area of the single face, unless otherwise provided in the Land Development Code.
- (b) The *sign face* for all other multiple-faced *signs* is the total area of all faces or panels.

- (c) The *sign face* of painted *signs*, individual letter *signs*, and *internally illuminated signs* is calculated on the basis of the smallest rectangle, circle, or spherical figure that will enclose the entire copy area of the *sign*.
- (d) The *sign face* does not include incidental striping and lighting elements used to highlight architectural features of the building such as parapets, facade breaks, window lines, entries, or demarcation of surface texture break. Striping and lighting elements may not connect to or through the actual copy area of the *sign* or constitute an enclosing frame or a highlighting of the *sign copy*. A minimum separation of 12 inches, or 6 inches for each 12 inches of *sign copy* height, shall be maintained between any element of the *sign copy* and the striping and lighting element.

**Diagram 113-02EE**

**Sign Face and Sign Copy Area**



(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)  
(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)



**§113.0261 Determining a Story**

A *story* is that portion of a building between finish-*floor* elevations, between finish-*floor* and roof elevations, and between *grade* and finish-*floor* elevations.

(a) *First Story*

The first *story* is the lowest *story* or ground *story* of any building, the *floor* of which is not more than 2 feet, 6 inches above *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, measured to the finish-*floor* elevation.

(b) *Attic*

An *attic* is a *story* if it meets one of the following criteria:

- (1) It has a mansard or similar roof;
- (2) It has a height that exceeds 7 feet, 6 inches from the finish-*floor* elevation to the peak of the roof immediately above;
- (3) It has *dormers* projecting from a sloping roof where the *attic* can be used as a habitable area, unless the *dormer* is designed exclusively for ventilation and is not accessible from a habitable area; or
- (4) The proposed *floor* area of the *attic* exceeds one-half of the *floor* area of the *story* immediately below.

(c) *Penthouse*

A *penthouse* is a *story* if it meets one of the following criteria:

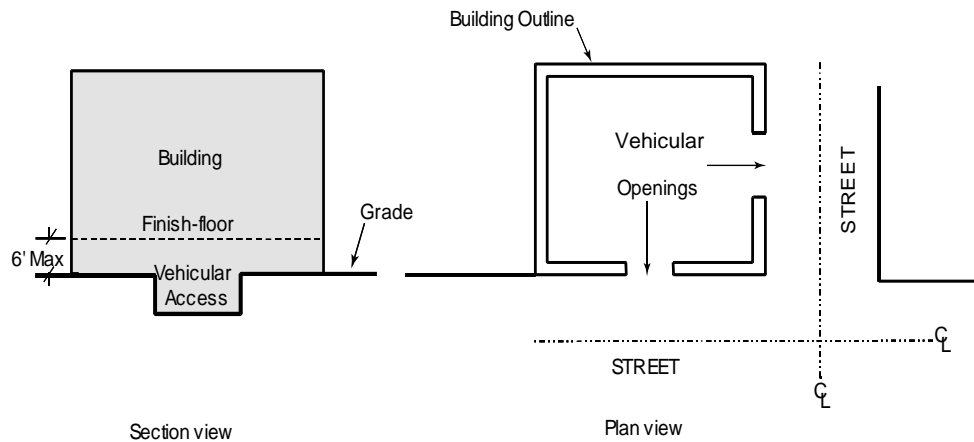
- (1) Its height above the *roof line* is more than 13 feet for an elevator shaft or more than 9 feet for a stairwell; or
- (2) Its total plan area is more than 10 percent of the roof plan area of the building.

(d) *Underground Parking Structures and Basements*

Underground parking structures and *basements* are *stories* if there is a vertical distance, at any point, of 6 feet or more between *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, and the finish-*floor* elevation immediately above. See Diagram 113-02FF.

**Diagram 113-02FF**

**Underground Parking Structures and Basements**



*(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)*

*(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)*

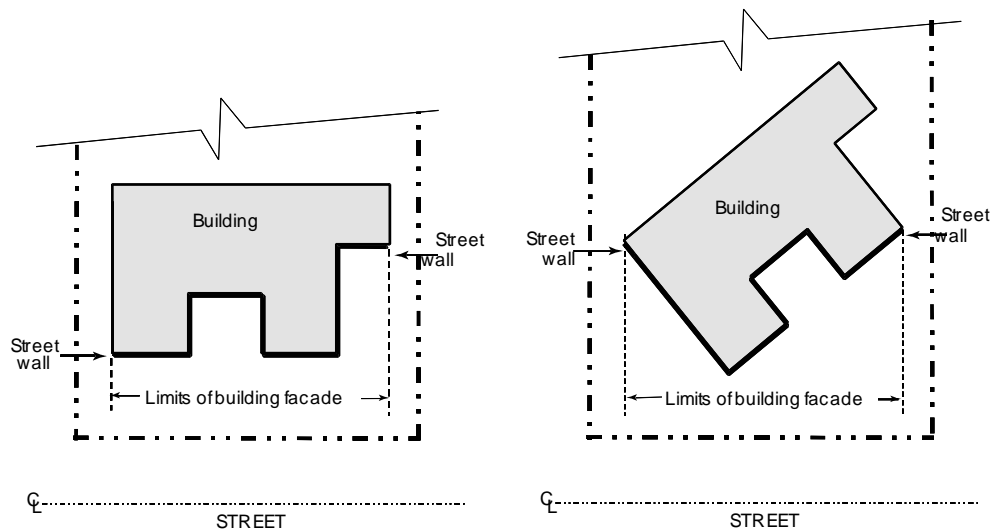
*(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)*

**§113.0264 Determining Street Wall**

- (a) The *street wall* is made up of the outer surfaces of all walls in all planes along that portion of the building that is between the limits of the *building facade*. The *street wall* follows all indentations along the *building facade*, as shown in Diagram 113-02GG.

**Diagram 113-02GG**

**Street Wall**



- ### Diagram 113-02HH

Diagram illustrating the components of a street wall length:

- BUILDING
- Street wall
- Segments: A, B, C, D, E, F, G
- Formula:  $\text{Length of street wall} = A + B + C + D + E + F + G$
- STREET

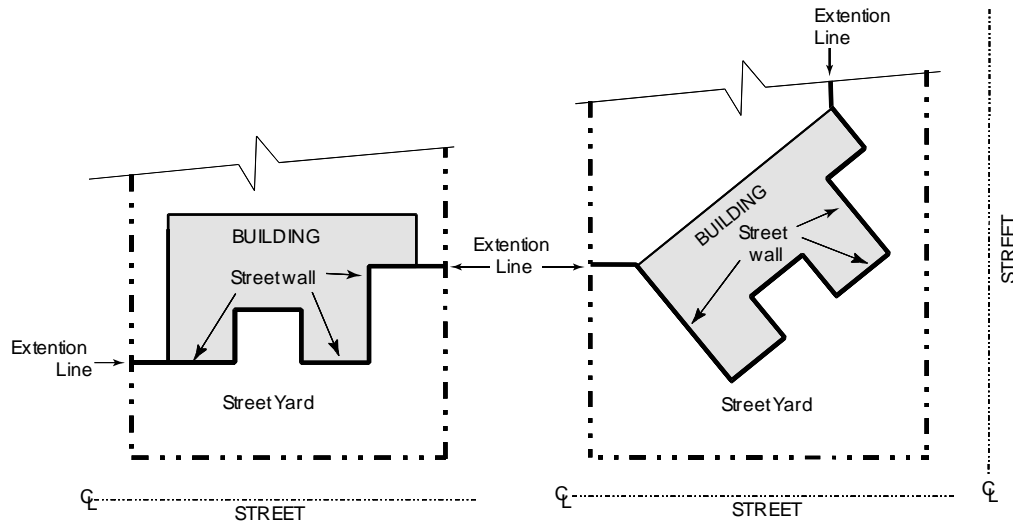
- (Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)*  
*(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)*

**§113.0267 Determining Street Wall Line**

The *street wall line* is used to delineate the *street yard*. The *street wall line* includes the *street wall* plus a line extending outward from the limits of the *street wall*, as shown in Diagram 113-02II. The extension lines shall be parallel to the *street* or single plane used to determined the *building facade*. Porches more than 3 feet above *grade* and site walls that are integral in material, design, and placement with the building and which maintain a minimum height of 4 feet may be included in determining the *street wall line*. For a corner lot, the *street wall line* includes the *street walls* for both frontages.

**Diagram 113-02II**

**Street Wall Line**



(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)

(Amended 3-1-06 by O-19468 N.S.; effective 4-1-2006.)

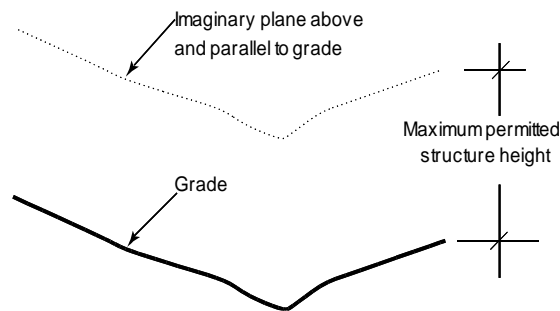
(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)

**§113.0270 Measuring Structure Height**

- (a) *Structure Height* of Buildings and *Structures* (Excluding *Fences*, *Retaining Walls*, or *Signs*)
- (1) The maximum permitted *structure height* is specified in the applicable zone and defines the upper limits of the *building envelope* for a *premises*. It is measured vertically from the *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, to form an imaginary plane that is parallel to *grade*, below which all buildings and *structures* must be located, except as otherwise described in 113.0270(a)(4). This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02JJ.

**Diagram 113-02JJ**

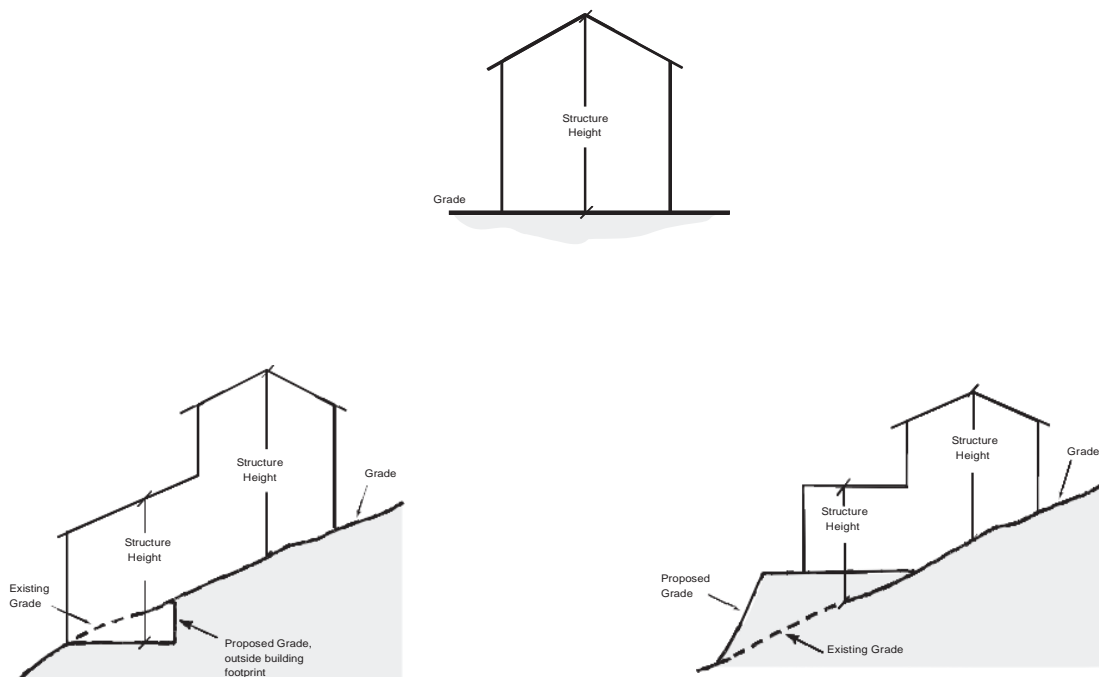
**Maximum Permitted Structure Height**



- (2) A two-part calculation is required to measure *structure height* including:
- (A) Plumb line measurement. The *structure height* is measured from all points on top of a *structure* to *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, directly below each point, except as described in Section 113.0270(a)(4). This measurement is taken vertically through the *structure* at each point where *structure height* is being measured, as shown in Diagram 113-2KK.

**Diagram 113-02KK**

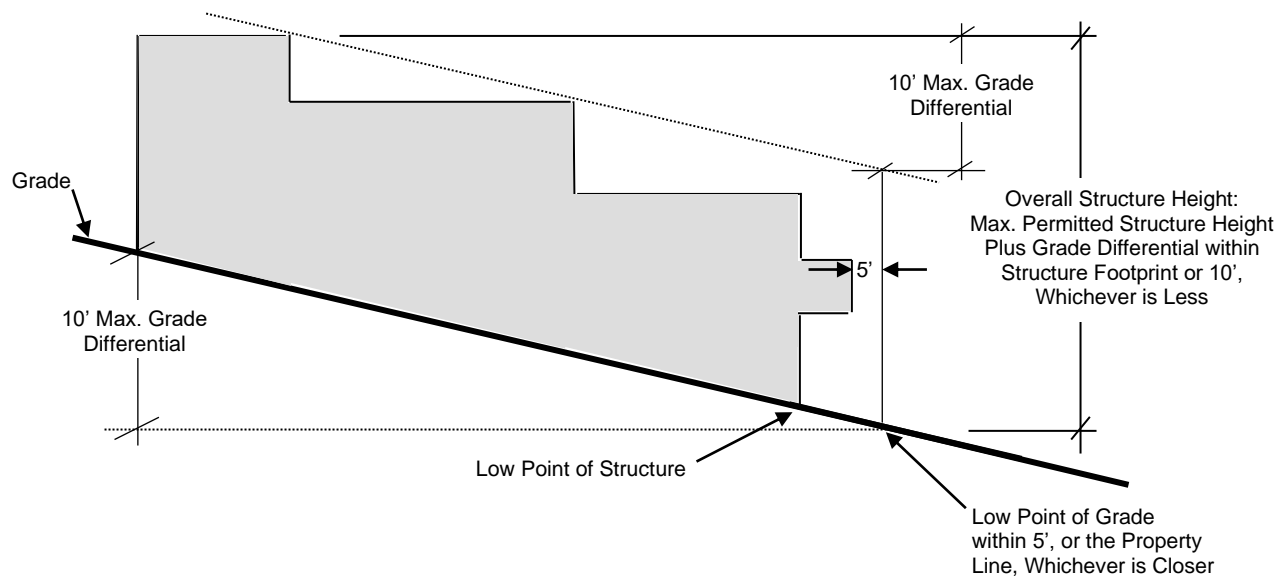
**Measurement of Structure Height**



- (B) Overall Height Measurement. The overall *structure height* is measured from the lowest point of *existing grade* or *proposed grade* within 5 feet of the *structure's* perimeter (building wall, balcony, bay window, or similar *architectural projection*) or at the *property line*, whichever is closer, to the highest point of the *structure*, projected horizontally to directly above this lowest point of *grade*. The overall *structure height* shall not exceed the maximum permitted *structure height* of the applicable zone plus an amount equal to either the maximum *grade differential* within the *structure's* footprint or 10 feet, whichever is less. The *structure height* shall not exceed the maximum allowed by the applicable zone at any one point. This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02LL.

**Diagram 113-02LL**

**Overall Structure Height**

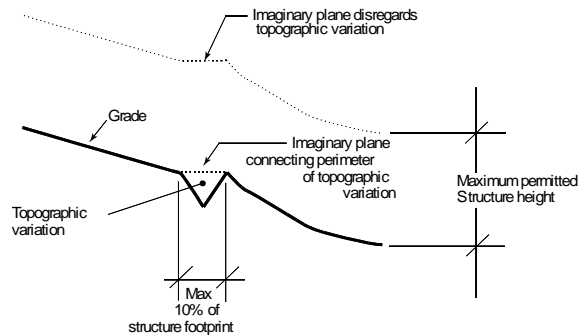




- (3) *Structure height* is measured separately for each *structure* that is separated from another *structure* on the *premises* by 6 feet or more. Separation between *structures* shall be measured in plan view to account for the *structural envelope* of each *structure*.
- (4) Special Circumstances
  - (A) Extreme Topographic Variation. Where there is an extreme natural topographic variation on a *premises* that covers 10 percent or less of the proposed *structure's* footprint, as shown in Diagram 113-02MM, overall *structure height* is measured from an imaginary plane made by connecting the perimeter points of the topographic variation, so that the imaginary plane above and parallel to *grade* will not reflect the extreme natural topographic variation.

**Diagram 113-02MM**

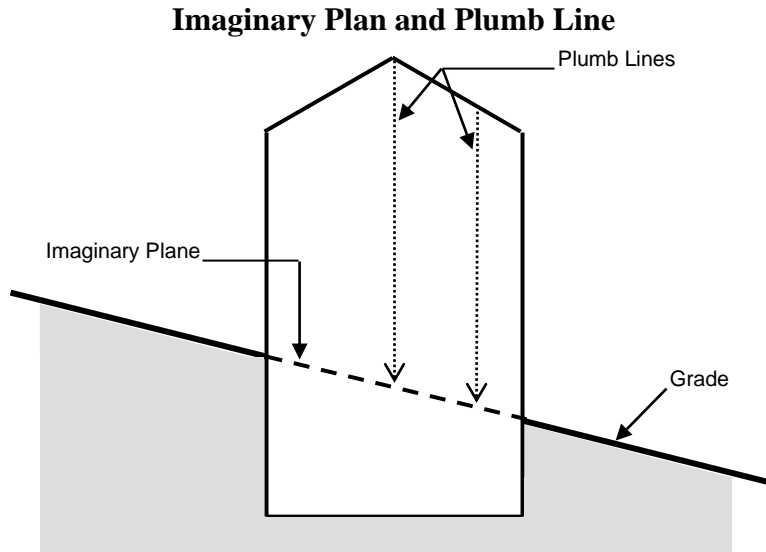
**Structure Height at Basement**



(B) Measuring *Structure Height* for Subterranean Areas

- (i) Interior Subterranean Areas. Where a *basement*, underground parking *structure*, *interior court*, or other similar interior subterranean area is proposed, the plumb line measurement to the lower of *existing grade* or *proposed grade* shall be measured to an imaginary plane through the building that connects the adjacent *grade* elevations on both sides of the *structure* as shown in Diagram 113-02NN.

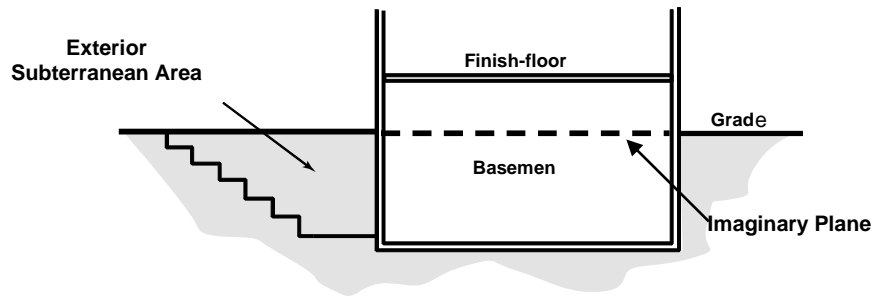
**Diagram 113-02NN**



- (ii) Exterior Subterranean Areas. The overall *structure height* measurement shall not include subterranean vehicular access, exterior subterranean pedestrian access, light wells of less than 5 feet from the building wall, or ventilation to a *basement*. Overall *structure height* shall instead be measured from an imaginary plane connecting to the lowest *adjacent grade* immediately above the exterior subterranean space, as shown in Diagram 113-0200.

**Diagram 113-0200**

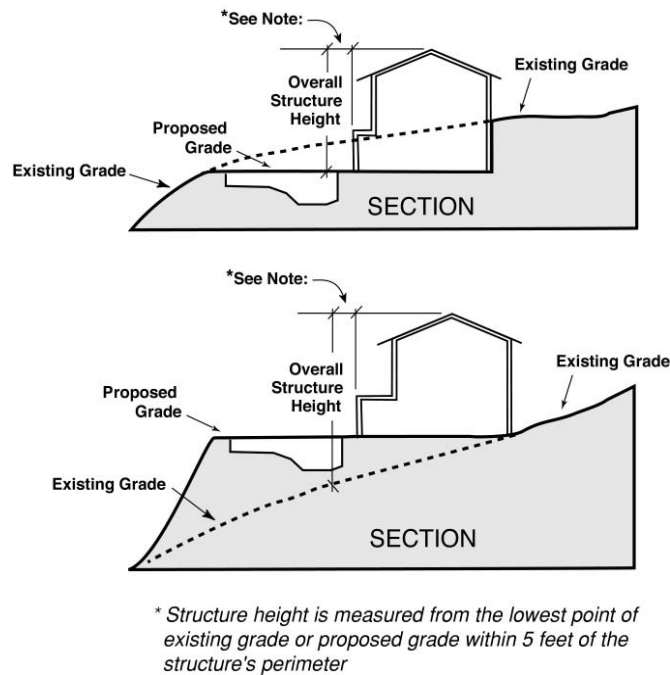
**Access and Ventilation to Basement**



- (C) When a pool is located within 5 feet of the *structure*, the overall *structure height* shall not include the pool. This is illustrated in Diagram 113-02PP.

**Diagram 113-02PP**

**Overall Structure Height With Pool**



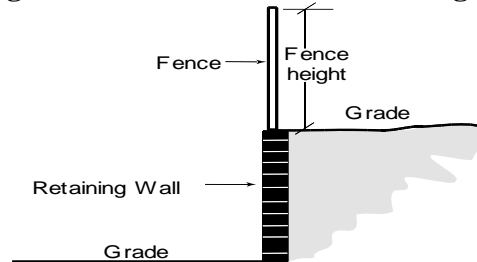
- (D) *Structure Height* of Buildings subject to Coastal Height Limit in accordance with Section 132.0505.
- (i) The height of a building is measured to the uppermost point of the *structure* or any appurtenance placed upon the roof thereof, including *signs*, penthouses, mechanical equipment, chimneys, vent stacks, spires, or steeples, or other projections.

- (ii) The base of the measurement shall be taken from finished grade in accordance with the 1970 Uniform Building Code. The height shall be measured from the highest adjoining sidewalk or ground surface within 5 feet of the *structure*, provided that the height measured from the lowest adjoining surface shall not exceed such maximum height by more than 10 feet.
    - (iii) *Structure height* of buildings subject to the Coastal Height Limit shall also comply with the zoning height requirements measured in accordance with this Division.
  - (5) *Structures* excluded from the measurement of *structure height*  
  
Uninhabited roof *structures* up to 15 feet in height that conceal mechanical equipment, elevators, stair overruns, trellis and shade *structures*, and *fences* with a surface area at least 75 percent open to light are excluded from the calculation of *structure height* for *development*, if all of the following conditions exist:
    - (A) The *development* is not located within the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone, within the Clairemont Mesa Height Limit Overlay Zone, or within a designated view corridor within the Coastal Overlay Zone;
    - (B) The *structure height*, exclusive of the exemptions permitted in Section 113.0270(a)(5), is 45 feet or greater;
    - (C) The *development* is a commercial and residential mixed-use project; and
    - (D) The *structure* does not project above a 45-degree plane inclined inward from the top of the parapet of the nearest wall, except that trellises and shade *structures* outside of the 45-degree plane may be 9 feet in height, and *fences* outside of the 45-degree plane with a surface area at least 75 percent open to light may be 4 feet in height.
- (b) *Structure Height of Fences, Walls, and Retaining Walls*
  - (1) *Fence* and Wall Height

- (A) The height of any portion of a *fence* or wall is measured from the lowest *grade* abutting the *fence* or wall to the top of the *fence* or wall, except that the height of a *fence* or wall on top of a *retaining wall* is measured from *grade* on the higher side of the *retaining wall*, as shown in Diagram 113-02QQ.

**Diagram 113-02QQ**

**Height of Fence or Wall on Retaining Wall**

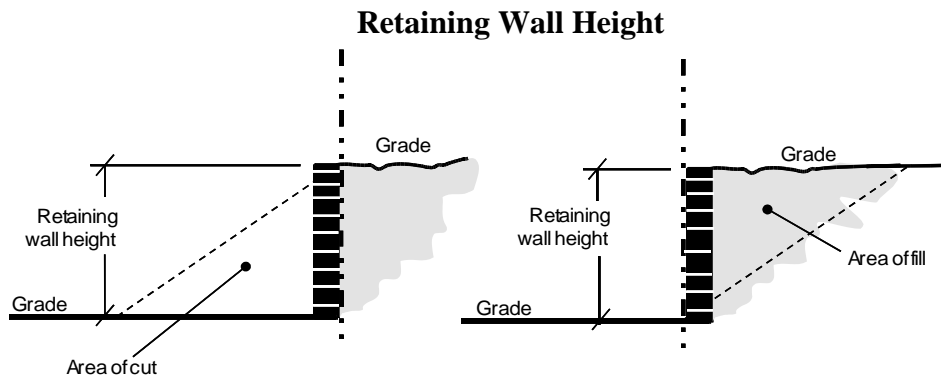


- (B) The height of a *fence* or wall may be averaged between two points along the *property line* to create a straight line along the top of the *fence* or wall, provided that the average height does not exceed the maximum permitted.

(2) *Retaining Wall Height*

The height of a *retaining wall* is measured from *grade* on the lower side of the *retaining wall* to the top of the *retaining wall*, as shown in Diagram 113-02RR.

**Diagram 113-02RR**



(c) *Structure Height of Signs*

The height of a ground *sign* is measured from the lowest point of the *existing grade* or *proposed grade*, whichever is lower, immediately adjacent to the base of the *sign* to the highest point at the top of the *sign structure*.

*(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)*

*(Amended 11-28-2005 by O-19444 N.S.; effective 2-9-2006.)*

*(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)*

*(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)*

*(Amended 6-18-2013 by O-20261 N.S.; effective 7-19-2013.)*

*(Amended 7-10-2015 by O-20512 N.S.; effective 8-9-2015.)*

*(Amended 2-1-2021 by O-21288 N.S.; effective 3-3-2021.)*

*(Amended 1-27-2022 by O-21416 N.S.; effective 2-26-2022.)*

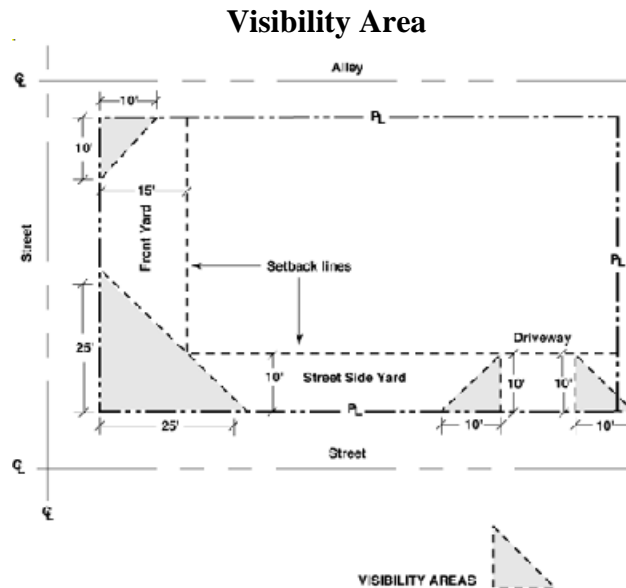
### §113.0273 Measuring Visibility Area

The *visibility area* is a triangular portion of a *premises* formed by drawing one line perpendicular to and one line parallel to the *property line* or *public right-of-way* for a specified length and one line diagonally joining the other two lines, as shown in Diagram 113-02SS.

- (a) The City Engineer shall determine whether proposed *development* provides adequate sight distance based on the context of the *development* and the typical distance guidelines set forth in Section 113.0273(b) and shall require *visibility areas* accordingly. No *structures* may be located within a *visibility area* unless otherwise provided by the applicable zone or the regulations in Chapter 14, Article 2 (General Development Regulations).
- (b) Typical Distances Used to Measure Visibility Areas
  - (1) For *visibility areas* at the intersection of *streets*, two sides of the triangle extend along the intersecting *property lines* for 25 feet and the third side is a diagonal line that connects the two.
  - (2) For *visibility areas* at the intersection of a *street* and *alley*, two sides of the triangle extend along the intersecting *property lines* for 10 feet and the third side is a diagonal line that connects the two.
  - (3) For *visibility areas* at the intersection of a *street* and driveway, one side of the triangle extends from the intersection of the *street* and the driveway for 10 feet along the *property line*. The second side extends from the intersection of the *street* and driveway for 10 feet inward from the property line along the driveway edge and the third side of the triangle connects the two.
  - (4) Where the required front and street side yards measure less than 25 feet when combined, that measurement or 15 feet, whichever is greater, establishes the *visibility area* at the street intersection.



Diagram 113-02SS



- (c) The City Engineer may modify the typical distance used to measure *visibility areas* in Section 113.0273(a) and (b) through a Process One permit review.
- (1) The distance specified in Section 113.0273(b) may be increased if the City Engineer determines that a greater distance is required to maintain public health and safety.
  - (2) The distance specified in Section 113.0273(b) may be reduced if the City Engineer determines that the reduced distance would not create a public health and safety hazard.

*(Amended 1-9-2001 by O-18910 N.S.; effective 8-8-2001.)*

*(Amended 11-28-2005 by O-19444 N.S.; effective 2-9-2006.)*

*(Amended 3-1-2006 by O-19467 N.S.; effective 8-10-2006.)*

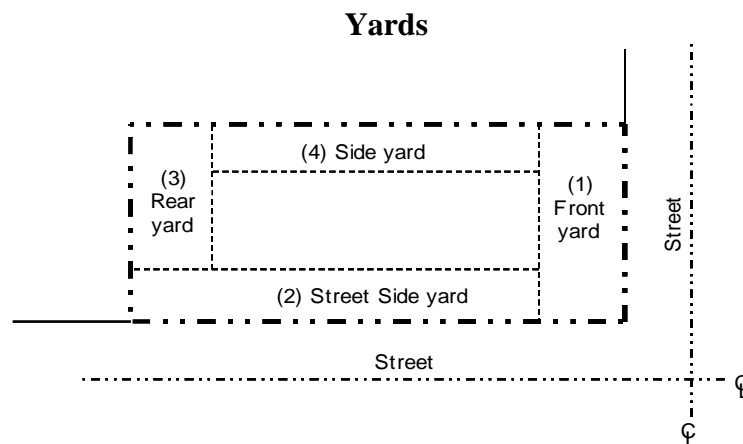
*(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)*

*(Amended 4-5-2016 by O-20634 N.S.; effective 5-5-2016.)*

**§113.0276 Determining Yards**

- (a) *Yards* are determined in the hierarchy described below and shown in Diagram 113-02TT:
- (1) *Front Yard*. The front *yard* is determined first. It is the area between the front *property line* and the front *setback line* and extends the full width of the *lot*.
  - (2) *Street Side Yard*. The street side yard, when applicable, is determined next. It is the area between the street side *property line* and the street side *setback line* that extends along the depth of the *lot* from the front *setback* to the rear *property line*. It does not include the front *yard*.
  - (3) *Rear Yard*. The rear *yard* is determined after the front and street side yards. It is the area between the rear *property line* and the rear *setback line* that extends along the width of the *lot* between the rear *property line* and the rear *setback*. It does not include the street side yard if one exists.
  - (4) *Side Yard*. The side *yard* is determined last. It is the area between the side *property line* and the side *setback line* that extends along the length of the *lot* from the front *setback* to the rear *setback* along the side *setback line* parallel to the side *property line*.

**Diagram 113-02TT**



(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)  
(Amended 11-28-2005 by O-19444 N.S.; effective 2-9-2006.)  
(Amended 11-13-2008 by O-19801 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)  
(Amended 8-4-2011 by O-20081 N.S.; effective 10-6-2011.)