Code Interpretation

Subject: Rooftop Equipment Screening Requirements

Date: October 3, 2023

**Code Sections Impacted:** 144.5.22-6(a) Non-residential and multifamily design standards - Roof treatments.

**Purpose:** To provide consistency for rooftop equipment screening requirements for non-residential buildings

**Proposal:** To clarify when the concealment of rooftop equipment is not applicable.

**Analysis:**

- Parapet walls should not be required to conceal rooftop equipment or flat roofs of non-residential buildings that are separated a significant distance from the public right of way, as impact to the building façade becomes negligible.
- The roof treatment section of the code does not take into account the topography of the land on which the building is located.
- The roof treatment section of the code does not take into account that state-controlled public rights-of-way can be designed and constructed at an elevation above the natural grade and/or ground floor elevation.
- The Site Line Example that is illustrated under Section 144 5.22-6(a) should be revised to include a label indicating the location of the public right-of-way or adjacent residential property.

**Interpretation:**

Due to:

- Mechanical equipment that is located on the rooftops of flat buildings is not likely to detract from the building’s appearance if separated a substantial distance from the public right-of-way, and
- Non-residential uses are often located more than 100 feet from the property line fronting a public right-of-way, and
- Many non-residential properties have an area and topography that makes the existing code requirement difficult to comply with, and
- The broad variety, type, and number of non-residential uses that are generally located adjacent to the state-controlled public right-of-way, and
- This section was intended for properties adjacent to city-controlled public right-of-way.

**Determination:**

Non-residential buildings that are located a minimum of 100 feet from a property line fronting public right-of-way or adjacent residential property or that are fronting state-controlled public right-of-way should not be required to construct a parapet wall to conceal rooftop equipment.
**Recommended Code Amendment:**
Revise the roof treatment section to clarify that non-residential buildings meeting standards that reduce the visual impact of rooftop equipment are not required to construct parapet walls for concealment.

Sec. 144-5.22. Non-residential and multifamily design standards.

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5.22-6. *Roof treatments.*

(a) Parapets shall be used to conceal rooftop equipment on flat roofs. **If a sight-line drawing is provided with the site plan showing that all rooftop equipment will not be visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent property, then a parapet wall shall not be required. A parapet wall shall not be required if any of the following requirements are met:**

- **A sight line drawing is provided with the site plan showing that all rooftop equipment will not be visible from the adjacent, city-controlled public right-of-way or adjacent residential property.**
- **A sight line drawing is provided with the site plan showing that all rooftop equipment will not be visible from adjacent, city-controlled public right-of-way and the building is a minimum of 100 feet away from any adjacent residential uses or residential zoning.**
- **The building is a minimum of 100 feet away from the property line fronting public right-of-way and any adjacent residential uses or residential zoning.**
- **The building is fronting state-controlled public right-of-way and is a minimum of 100 feet away from any adjacent residential uses or residential zoning.**

![Image 5. Sight Line Example](image)

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[Signature]

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