UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

CHAPTER 5. ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

5.6. General design requirements.

5.6.4. Fenestration and transparency.

A. ***Windows***:

1. Windows shall express each individual floor of the building; windows shall not span multiple floors.
2. The top of all windows on the same floor of a building shall be aligned horizontally.
3. The centerlines of all windows on multi-floor buildings shall be aligned vertically.
4. For tailored Window regulations based on architectural style, refer to Section 5.8.

B. ***Transparency in General:*** Each building story shall feature a façade transparency of 20% min to ~~33~~35% max.

1. Façade transparency shall be calculated for the area between finished floors and shall be the total percentage of door and window area along that portion of the façade. Upper floor transparency shall be measured to the finished ceiling.

C. ***Commercial Non-Shopfront Transparency:*** ~~Applicants shall provide a diagram to demonstrate compliance with these provisions.~~In accordance with NCGS 160D-702.1, commercial or mixed-use buildings used primarily for non-shopfront purposes shall have a minimum transparency requirement of 20% of the ground floor area façade.

1. For the purposes of this provision, the following are considered non-storefront uses:
    i. Religious assembly or sanctuary space;
    ii. Medical or dental examination, treatment, or healthcare services;
    iii. Educational instruction or counseling;
    iv. Civic or nonprofit services;
    v. Funeral services
    vi. Lodge or meeting hall use;
    vii. Storage or back-of-house operations;
    viii. Other institutional, assembly, or services uses not primarily operated as walk-in retail, restaurant, bar, entertainment, or commercial storefront uses.

~~C.~~**D.** ***Shopfront Transparency:***

1. Fenestration standards do not apply to Shopfront Frontages, which are regulated under the design standards in Section 5.10.2.

E. ~~For tailored Window regulations based on architectural style, refer to Section 5.8.~~Applicants shall provide a diagram to demonstrate compliance with these provisions.

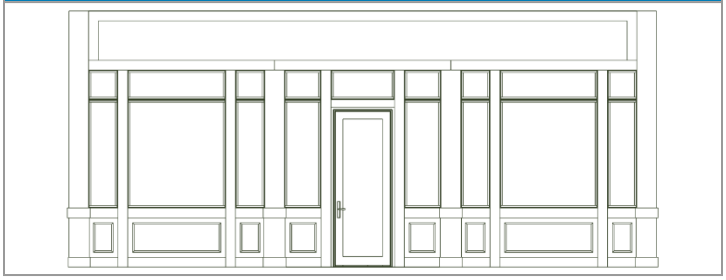
(Ord. No. 2025-14, § 1(Exh. A), 4-7-25)

5.10. Building frontages.

5.10.2. Shopfront.

A. Shopfronts should have large glass windows that both create advantageous display spaces and allow natural light to filter deeper into the building. Inset entrances prevent doors from swinging into the pedestrian right-of-way. Shopfronts often include a bulkhead, cornice, and piers or pilaster. They may also include awnings or canopies to provide protection from the weather.

FIGURE 5.10.2-A: SHOPFRONT ILLUSTRATION



B. *Dimensions.*

1. The maximum distance between fenestration is 2 feet.
2. The ground floor transparency shall be a minimum of 35%. Shopfronts are encouraged to have ground floor transparency between 70-90% on the primary street and ~~30~~35-90% on the side street.
3. The shopfront door shall be recessed a maximum of 5 feet.
4. Multiple entrances shall be a maximum of 40 feet apart along the primary street.

C. *Components.*

1. Each shopfront frontage shall have an entrance. The door may have a transparency between 40-90%.
2. Display windows shall use clear glass or clear low-e glass.
3. Fascia is permitted.
4. Sills are required with a height between 1.5 inches and 3 inches.

D. *Design*. The shopfront must use materials that complement the Architectural Style of the building.

(Ord. No. 2025-14, § 1(Exh. A), 4-7-25)

CHAPTER 19. DEFINITIONS

19.3. Definitions.

Fenestration: Openings on a building façade, such as Windows and Doors. Fenestration expresses each floor of the building.