



City of Santa Barbara

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITATIONS

Most land use zones have specific building height limitations **and** conditions (beyond those outlined in [City Charter 1506](#)), including story limitations, additional height limitations for commercial buildings adjacent to residential zones, or Community Benefit requirements. Always refer to the applicable Santa Barbara Municipal Code (SBMC) sections for the most current regulations. The following information is intended to assist in depicting the maximum vertical height of a building.

Building Height Definition (SBMC§28.04.140):

“The maximum vertical height of a building or structure at all points measured from **natural** or **finished** grade, **whichever is lower**. Architectural elements that do not add floor area to a building, such as chimneys, vents, antennae, and towers, are not considered a part of the height of a building, but all portions of the roof are included.”

How to Measure Building Height. The following diagram shows how the maximum building height limitation applies in the single, and two-family residential zones. The same concept applies to all zones, but with different height limits.

To measure the maximum allowed height of the structure, project that distance from natural or finished grade, whichever is lower, as shown. The vertical lines represent the maximum height limit of 30’.

